



Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™

Global Competency Framework

Korn Ferry Interview Architect™ Interview guide

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About the editor

Heather Barnfield is Director, Intellectual Property Development for Korn Ferry. She served as editor for this Interview guide as well as co-writing the content. Heather has over twenty years' experience working with interviewing materials and processes through her leadership of numerous teams as an HR professional and as a consultant. She has designed and implemented recruitment and selection procedures for organizations as well as developing and delivering training programs on the subject.

Heather was part of the team who developed the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ global competency framework and co-authored the Korn Ferry Institute competencies best practices paper titled *Define, Distill, Deploy*. She edited and co-wrote the *FYI® for your improvement competencies development guide* as well as the Korn Ferry *Talent Review* product suite. Heather's career, focusing on leadership development, talent management, and engagement, has spanned a variety of leadership positions, as well as consultancy, across a wide range of industries. Originally from the UK, Heather has been based in the US since 2009.

Acknowledgments

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How to use this guide

Research has consistently shown that structured, standardized interviews yield more accurate and reliable results than an informal, free-flowing approach.

The Korn Ferry Interview Architect™ Interview guide provides you with a straightforward means to evaluate candidates on competencies most critical to on-the-job success. For the most efficient and effective use of this guide, just follow these guidelines:

Prior to the interview, identify the items you want to find out about, the ones important for success on the job. The number of items you select may range from just a few to several, depending on the complexity of the position you are interviewing for and/or at what stage you are in the selection process.

- Mark the pages corresponding to the items you want to evaluate and choose from the list of questions for each.
- During the interview, take notes on the accompanying Interview notes form to capture the content of the candidate's responses.
- For consistency and ease of comparison, ask each candidate the same interview questions and structured follow-up probes.
- Assess the themes from the candidate's responses in the positive/negative themes observed section on the Interview notes form.
- Evaluate the candidate in the Overall competency rating section.

Structured probes

Structured follow-up probes are important for gaining more insight into a candidate's strength, or experience, on a particular item. Following each main interview question, ask each of these follow-up probes:

- (A) **ACTIONS:** How did you approach it? How did you do it?
(Listen for specific action steps)
- (B) **THINKING:** Explain your thinking—why you selected that approach. Why did you choose to do it that way?
(Listen for rationale and consideration of alternatives.)
- (C) **OUTCOME:** What was the result? What was the impact?
- (D) **LEARNINGS:** What did you take away from this? What is the relevance?
(Listen for principles or rules of thumb.)
- (E) **APPLICATION:** Describe a time when you used those lessons in a different situation.

In a few select cases, particularly with competencies that have a strong knowledge component, a slightly different set of probes may be required. Consult the following competencies for guidance on which specific probes to ask:

Attracts top talent (4)

Business insight (5)

Financial acumen (17)

Global perspective (18)

Demonstrates self-awareness (29)

Self-development (30)

Strategic mindset (33)

Tips for interviewing success

Prepare. Even if you are an experienced interviewer, resist the temptation to “wing it.” Give appropriate consideration to the items you want to focus on and the specific questions you want to ask. Take time to familiarize yourself with the “Themes to listen for” so you can evaluate candidate responses with a clear framework in mind.

Budget your time. Consider the time available to conduct the interview relative to the number of items you want to evaluate. We generally recommend trying to evaluate no more than five to seven items in a one-hour session.

Stay neutral. Listen attentively but avoid small talk and approving responses. Stick to the structure of the interview and establish an appropriately formal tone.

Take notes. Stay engaged with what the candidate is saying, but don’t forget to record your observations during the course of the interview. Key facts and bullet-point observations will keep your recollections fresh.

Be consistent. Ask the same questions in the same sequence for each candidate for a particular position.

Evaluate carefully. Be careful of rushing to judgment. As you progress from the initial question through the various follow-ups, your assessment of the candidate’s responses may shift positively or negatively. Also, leave enough time after the interview to take stock of your observations and review your ratings.

Best Practices

Behavioral interviewing

Behavioral interviewing is based on the belief that the best predictor of future performance is past performance (when conditions are similar). Behavior-based interviews allow the interviewer to gather information about what candidates have done in the past to predict how they will act in the future.

Here are a few examples of how behavioral interview questions assist in uncovering core Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ competencies in an interview.

Competency	Standard interview question	Behavioral interview question
Communicates effectively (7)	How would you rate your communication skills?	Tell me about a time when you had to communicate the same information to different audiences and had to vary your style for each.
<i>Manages</i> conflict (9)	How do you approach handling a conflict situation?	Describe a time you mediated a high-tension situation.
Resourcefulness (27)	How would you describe yourself in terms of resourcefulness?	Tell me about a time you had to start something from scratch.

Behavior from the past may be the best predictor of future behavior when conditions are similar, but the ability to learn from experience and apply those learnings to new challenges is a clear indicator of a person's potential to perform in the future under new and unknown circumstances.

Once we are satisfied that the candidate can perform the job in its current state, we want to know if they can change as the job or organization changes and whether they can grow into future jobs.

An additional element that can provide insight into a candidate is interviewing for “learning agility”—a strong predictor of who performs well in challenging, first-time situations and has the potential to succeed at higher levels of responsibility.

Interviewing for learning agility

Learning agility is evident when a candidate demonstrates how their approach to an issue changed after a particular experience.

Input – I used to be like this.

Experience – This happened.

Output – Now I am like this, and I have applied it in this situation...

Why focus on learning agility?

- Few jobs stay the same over time.
- It's difficult to find the perfect candidate who totally matches the skills profile for the role—some skills will need to be learned on the job.
- Learning agility is a key to predicting how well a person can make changes and acquire new skills.

Characteristics of “agile” learners include evidence of:

- Learning from their experiences.
- Applying learnings to new situations.
- Seeing parallels and contrasts.
- Performing well in first-time situations.

The interviewing process

With the right people in the right roles, an organization dramatically improves its capacity to execute its business strategy. The “right” people are those who are willing and able to deliver the desired results.

Once you have adequately screened for technical skills, turn your attention to the behavioral skills—the competencies that will determine how the individual will perform and the results they will achieve.

Competencies describe the skills individuals need to be good at in order to contribute to team or organizational performance. When used to define what it will take to be successful, competencies serve as criteria for selecting the best person for the job.

Korn Ferry’s interviewing process enables you to achieve the right match between people and jobs. The end-to-end process can be described in three stages:

Prepare interview

Determine job requirement	Select competencies for interview	Select interview questions for each competency	Prepare interview
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Conduct interview

Main interview questions	Structured Probes	Identify themes in answers	Other interview elements
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Evaluate interview

Assess against competencies	Assess candidate's learning agility	Assess other interview elements	Overall candidate evaluation
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Prepare

Determining competencies for a position

Each position requires different competencies to achieve success; some are directly related to the job, others reflect the broader goals of the organization.

The ranking of competencies—in order of importance to the position being filled—is usually undertaken by a panel of stakeholders. The panel (which may include incumbents, past incumbents, the manager, peers, or clients) ranks the competencies as follows:

- High importance for the position.
- Moderate importance for the position.
- Low importance for the position.

It is not necessary for a role to require skill in all competencies. When deciding on whether a competency is of “High” importance, think of it primarily from the viewpoint of:

- Would the incumbent be able to perform the role without the competency?
- Would there be any negative impact if the competency was not displayed in the role?

Selecting competencies for the interview

When a success profile is established for a position, there may be too many competencies to address in the interview. Typically, only five to seven competencies can be effectively assessed in an hour-long interview. To gain the most value out of the interview, it is advisable to focus on the competencies that will make a difference and contribute to high performance in the role.

There are two factors that can help you decide which competencies differentiate superior performers from average performers:

- **Skill of most people** – How common is it for people to be skilled in the competency by level?
- **Developmental difficulty** – How difficult is it for a person to develop this competency?

Considering these factors, it is helpful to think of competencies this way:

- **Price-of-admission competencies** – Competencies that most people are fairly good at and are usually important in any job. They are readily found in candidates and are likely to be easier to develop.

- **Competitive-edge competencies** – Competencies that are in shorter supply and more difficult to develop, therefore providing a competitive edge to candidates possessing these skills.
- **Differentiator competencies** – These competencies are in shortest supply and hardest to develop. They differentiate candidates to a much greater degree because they make a real difference when someone has them.

It is important to establish that the candidate has the **price-of-admission competencies** for the position. However, if these are the competencies primarily used for selection, it would be difficult to differentiate one candidate from another due to the wide availability of the skills. Therefore, the price-of-admission competencies best serve as a preliminary screen during the initial stages of **talent attraction**.

In contrast, the **differentiator competencies** are in short supply and hard to develop. They may be suitable for use at advanced stages of selection to differentiate candidates who have similar skills in competitive-edge competencies. Otherwise, plan to focus on these competencies for **talent development** with successful candidates.

That leaves us with the **competitive-edge competencies**. More often than not, these competencies will be the focus of your talent selection efforts.

While there is a great deal of consistency within these categories across different levels, the categories can vary depending on what level the interview is aiming to fill. Our normative data supports six position levels:

- Entry level individual contributor
- Mid-senior level individual contributor
- First level leader or supervisor
- Mid-level leader
- Business unit leader
- Senior executive

Note: Normative data are pending for the Financial acumen and *Balances* stakeholders competencies.

If a competency category varies depending on the position level, we have included that information on each competency page under “Competency interview category.”

Consider these categories as general rules of thumb in selecting competencies to interview for, not absolutes. The ultimate decision of which competencies to include depends on the specific nature of the job and your understanding of the requirements candidates need for success.

Conduct

People conducting interviews should ask questions that are only relevant to the knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience required for the position.

Below are some examples of questions which should not be asked in an interview. Note that this is not an exhaustive list. You should seek guidance from your Human Resources or Legal department before you meet with a candidate.

- How old are you? What is your date of birth?

- What language do you speak at home?
- How many sick days did you take last year?
- Are you married? What is your maiden name?
- Do you reside with another person?
- Do you have any children?
- Who cares for the children while you are working?

80/20 Rule

The 80/20 rule is a good principle to apply when interviewing. When conducting an interview, the candidate should be doing around 80% of the talking, leaving you with the remaining 20% of the time to frame questions, probe for more information and insight, and, where appropriate, promote the position so that it is attractive to the candidate.

Evaluate

Assessing competencies

After you have interviewed the candidate, you will need to assess whether the individual is suitable for the role based on their experience, expertise, and ability to demonstrate skill in the competencies critical to the role.

Based on the candidate's responses during the interview, implications or conclusions can be drawn about the candidate's ability to meet the required standard against a competency.

There are many things to consider when evaluating the candidate's responses. Here are some useful tips to follow:

- **Keep an open mind.** Be careful not to reach conclusions prematurely. Continue listening through all of the follow-up probes.
- **Weigh data sufficiently.** Strive to look at positive and negative observations objectively.
- **Align your observations.** Make sure that what you are observing pertains to the particular competency you are evaluating.
- **Consider what isn't said.** Sometimes the absence of behaviors or information you would otherwise expect is indicative of an underdeveloped competency.
- **Evaluate the broader context.** Behaviors don't exist in a vacuum. Remember to look at the bigger picture.
- **Pay attention to past and present.** Don't just examine what happened in the past; take a look at the candidate's behavior in the here and now.
- **Contemplate future scenarios.** Project past and present behavior into on-the-job situations.
- **Look for patterns and themes.** Connect the dots where appropriate.

Staying objective

It is important to be aware of potential biases that may influence your perceptions during an interview. Research has identified several common misperceptions that can occur when evaluating others. Here are a few to keep an eye out for:

- The halo and horns effect. When we detect a quality in an individual that leaves a strong positive impression, we have a tendency to automatically generalize that impression to multiple dimensions of a person's behavior. The same effect occurs for negative behaviors. We find it difficult to form a positive view once we have identified a trait or quality that creates a negative impression.
- The similar-to-me bias. We tend to like and feel more comfortable with people we see as similar to ourselves.
- The contrast effect. After seeing several mediocre candidates, your perceptions of an average candidate's skills can be positively inflated.

Assessing learning agility

Learning agility can be used across questions to look for evidence of past learning. What are the person's tendencies in tough, first-time, or different situations. It can also project how the candidate might do in future situations. This is particularly important for people who have limited backgrounds. For example, a person might be unable to answer many of the negotiation questions due to lack of experience, yet show openness to learning new skills across a range of questions in the interview.

A separate one-page template is provided in the Korn Ferry Interview Architect™ guide tools to evaluate a candidate's learning agility. This template is used by the interviewer after the interview to assess the overall learning orientation of the candidate.

The template provides a checklist of statements that describe Passive/Non-learners or Active/Agile learners.

Before completing the template, consult your interview notes and do the following:

- Look for patterns across responses.
- Look for repetitive actions and behavior (i.e., same positive and/or negative issues in various jobs).
- Note typical approach to problem solving, making decisions, ways of dealing with people, handling conflict, etc.

When completing the template, consider the candidate's responses to all questions during the interview and indicate which statements would best describe the candidate. Does the candidate avoid risk or take the lead? Is the person closed to feedback or do they ask for feedback?

Candidate summary evaluation

In addition to questions related to role-critical competencies, you may cover other areas during the interview such as the candidate's background, past experience, qualifications, and personal motivations. In this case, you will benefit from assessing the candidate more fully against the standards required for the position.

The Candidate summary evaluation form allows you to capture your overall assessment of the interview with the candidate. This can include other elements of the interview apart from the competency-based questioning.

The form includes a five-point rating scale for the following categories:

- Experience, past performance, and track record.
- Job/functional/technical skills.
- Competencies interviewed for.
- Other characteristics related to job requirements.
- Learning agility.
- Organization/culture fit.
- How do you rate this person relative to the standard for the position?
- Can this individual grow to reach the standard of this competency in a reasonable period of time?

It is also helpful to complete this form if there are multiple candidates and if there are multiple interviewers of the candidates so that you can compare the overall assessment of all interviewers.

When rating candidates against each category, remember:

3 is Meets requirements and should be the target rating for candidates.

4 or **5** may mean the candidate can hit the ground running.

Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™ Global Competency Framework

FACTOR I: THOUGHT

Cluster A: Understanding the business

- 5. Business insight
- 11. Customer focus
- 17. Financial acumen
- 35. Tech savvy

Cluster B: Making complex decisions

- 8. *Manages* complexity
- 12. Decision quality
- 32. *Balances* stakeholders

Cluster C: Creating the new and different

- 18. Global perspective
- 19. *Cultivates* innovation
- 33. Strategic mindset

FACTOR II: RESULTS

Cluster D: Taking initiative

- 2. Action oriented
- 27. Resourcefulness

Cluster E: Managing execution

- 15. Directs work
- 25. Plans and aligns
- 38. *Optimizes* work processes

Cluster F: Focusing on performance

- 1. *Ensures* accountability
- 28. *Drives* results

FACTOR III: PEOPLE

Cluster G: Building collaborative relationships

- 6. Collaborates
- 9. *Manages* conflict
- 20. Interpersonal savvy
- 21. *Builds* networks

Cluster H: Optimizing diverse talent

- 4. Attracts top talent
- 13. Develops talent
- 14. *Values* differences
- 34. *Builds effective* teams

Cluster I: Influencing people

- 7. Communicates effectively
- 16. *Drives* engagement
- 23. Organizational savvy
- 24. Persuades
- 37. *Drives* vision and purpose

FACTOR IV: SELF

Cluster J: Being authentic

- 10. Courage
- 36. *Instills* trust

Cluster K: Being open

- 29. *Demonstrates* self-awareness
- 30. Self-development

Cluster L: Being flexible and adaptable

- 3. *Manages* ambiguity
- 22. Nimble learning
- 26. *Being* resilient
- 31. Situational adaptability

CAREER STALLERS AND STOPPERS

M. Trouble with people

102. Blocked personal learner

103. *Lack of ethics and values*

110. Political missteps

N. Doesn't inspire or build talent

101. *Poor administrator*

104. Failure to build a team

105. Failure to staff effectively

O. Too narrow

106. Key skill deficiencies

107. Non-strategic

108. Overdependence on an advocate

109. Overdependence on a single skill

FACTOR II: RESULTS

Cluster F. Focusing on performance

1. *Ensures accountability*

DEFINITION

Holding self and others accountable to meet commitments.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Follows through on commitments; ensures that others do the same.
2. Takes personal responsibility for decisions, actions, and failures.
3. Works with people to determine clear performance standards.
4. Establishes processes for monitoring and measuring results.
5. Ensures that feedback loops are effective.

Negative

1. Doesn't accept personal responsibility.
2. Prefers to share accountability with others.
3. Doesn't see commitments through to completion.
4. Doesn't gather information on how things are going.
5. Provides inadequate feedback to help others course correct.

Overuse

1. Enforces accountability without considering individuals' abilities/needs, changing realities, or forces that cannot be controlled.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Price-of-admission

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Taking personal responsibility...

1. Recall a time you made a mistake while working with others and had to make it right.*
2. Give me an example of a time you were unable to follow through on a commitment.

Setting goals and measuring progress...

3. Describe a time you had to set stretch goals and articulate how success would be measured.
4. Describe your approach to monitoring the progress of team members and holding them accountable.

Clarifying expectations...

5. Tell me about a time you had to communicate and manage new responsibilities when there was a significant shift in goals midway through a project.
6. Tell me about a time when you and your team struggled because you were not clear about who was responsible for a task or project.*

Monitoring results...

7. Describe a time you tried to improve the effectiveness of a team or workgroup.
8. Tell me about a time when you monitored and managed others' work on a complex task.

Using feedback loops...

9. Describe a time when a member of a team you were leading made a mistake.
10. Give me an example of how you explained to a direct report or team member what it was you wanted.

*OK for campus

FACTOR II: RESULTS

Cluster D: Taking initiative

2. Action oriented

DEFINITION

Taking on new opportunities and tough challenges with a sense of urgency, high energy, and enthusiasm.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Willing to act without unnecessary planning.
2. Identifies and seizes new opportunities.
3. Takes a can-do approach in good and bad situations.
4. Steps up to handle tough issues.
5. Shows initiative in tough situations.

Negative

1. Slow to act on an opportunity.
2. Spends too much time planning.
3. Waits too long to act; procrastinates.
4. Doesn't step up to challenges.
5. Shows little or no initiative in tough situations.

Overuse

1. Acts without purpose, consideration of consequences, or buy-in from others.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Price-of-admission

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Taking action first...

1. Tell me about a time you were the first person to take action on something.*
2. Tell me about a time you had to decide between more planning or taking immediate action.*

Seizing opportunities...

3. Describe a time when you seized an opportunity and moved forward with it yourself.*
4. Give me an example of how you identified a new opportunity worth pursuing.*

Facing difficult problems...

5. Explain what you did when faced with a difficult and urgent problem.*

6. Tell me about a time you had to take over someone else's challenging project.*

Expending energy and effort...

7. Tell me about a situation that required an enormous amount of energy and effort.*

8. Describe a tough situation when you demonstrated a can-do attitude.*

Managing pace and people...

9. Tell me about a time when you acted too hastily and had to deal with the consequences.*

10. Describe a project or issue you were eager to address, yet first needed others' buy-in.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR IV: SELF

Cluster L: Being flexible and adaptable

3. *Manages ambiguity*

DEFINITION

Operating effectively, even when things are not certain or the way forward is not clear.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Stays calm in uncomfortable situations.
2. Willing to experiment.
3. Comfortable not having the full picture before acting.
4. Willing to move forward despite uncertainty.
5. Flexible, adaptable; will shift gears.

Negative

1. High need to stay in comfort zone.
2. Likes clarity and certainty.
3. High need to finish things before moving on.
4. High need for structure and data.
5. Inflexible; doesn't make changes along the way.

Overuse

1. Makes decisions and takes action without enough data.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Differentiator

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Making decisions with little information...

1. Tell me about a time when you had a problem and you didn't know what to do.*
2. Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision and the information available was inadequate.*

Having problems with no clear solution...

3. Tell me about a time when you had to act on something important before you had time to come up with a clear answer or solution.*
4. Tell me about a time when it was difficult to make sense of the situation or need.*

Adapting quickly...

5. Give me an example of how your work habits changed when you didn't know exactly what to do.
6. Tell me about a time when a crisis made what you had been doing obsolete or ineffective.*

Progressing despite uncertainty...

7. Describe a project/assignment where the outcome or process was unclear.*
8. Give an example of when you entered a job or situation and had to make decisions immediately, without time to get your bearings.*

Making changes...

9. Tell me about a time when someone asked you to try something completely new to you.*
10. Tell me about a time when you had to change something significant in your work environment.

*OK for campus

FACTOR III: PEOPLE

Cluster H: Optimizing diverse talent

4. Attracts top talent

DEFINITION

Attracting and selecting the best talent to meet current and future business needs.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Matches talent to needs of the group.
2. Balances internal and external talent.
3. Uses a thorough and consistent process.
4. Good judge of talent.
5. Attracts and selects diverse talent.

Negative

1. Doesn't push for the right talent for the group.
2. Uses unstructured, inconsistent process.
3. Poor judge of talent.
4. Unclear on selection criteria.
5. Attracts limited range of talent.

Overuse

1. Standards too high; waits too long for best fit or overanalyzes.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Competitive edge

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Assessing talent requirements...

1. Tell me about a time you were responsible for picking team members.*
2. Tell me about a time you had to decide what kind of talent needed to be brought into the team.

Hiring external candidates...

3. Tell me about a time when you hired someone from outside the organization when others thought an internal candidate should have been given the job.
4. Talk about a time you significantly misjudged or misread someone you hired from outside the organization.

Valuing potential or current skill...

5. Describe a time you had to choose between someone who wasn't a great fit but had long-term potential, and someone who was a good fit for the current job only.
6. Tell me about a time you had to choose between two individuals you thought were equally qualified.*

Making a correct assessment of someone...

7. Tell me about a time when your ability to read people worked really well when hiring or selecting someone.
8. Tell me about a time when your first impression was incorrect and you changed your mind after you got to know the person.*

Making difficult hiring decisions...

9. Tell me about the most difficult position you have had to fill.
10. Describe a time when you assessed someone one way and others saw the person differently.*

STRUCTURED PROBES (IF DIFFERENT FROM STANDARD).

For 7 and 8 use only the Thinking, Outcome, Learnings, and Application probes.

For other questions, use all probes.

*OK for campus

FACTOR I: THOUGHT

Cluster A: Understanding the business

5. Business insight

DEFINITION

Applying knowledge of business and the marketplace to advance the organization's goals.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Understands how businesses work.
2. Understands the relationship between different aspects of business.
3. Aware of current business trends.
4. Applies business knowledge to job.
5. Understands the competition.

Negative

1. Doesn't understand how businesses work.
2. Not interested in broad business issues or trends.
3. Doesn't understand the relationship between different business elements.
4. Doesn't apply business knowledge and information.
5. Too internally focused on only their organization.

Overuse

1. Too quick to apply business knowledge without understanding the context.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Competitive edge

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Keeping current on business trends...

1. What are three trends in your current industry?
2. Explain how you keep yourself current on business practices and trends.*

Working for a successful business...

3. Tell me about a successful business and why you think it is successful.
4. Tell me about the most successful business you have worked for and why it was a success.

Keeping current on competitors...

5. Tell me about three advantages that your most recent organization's competitors have.

6. Describe how you keep current on products and services that are provided by your organization's competitors.

Developing business knowledge...

7. Tell me about a failing business and why you think it is struggling.

8. Describe how your knowledge of business has been developed.*

Making business decisions...

9. Tell me about a time your knowledge of marketplace trends influenced a decision you made.

10. Describe a time you made a decision that had a positive impact on the business as a whole.

STRUCTURED PROBES (IF DIFFERENT FROM STANDARD).

For 1-3, 5-6, and 8 use only Learnings and Application probes.

For other questions, use all probes.

*OK for campus

FACTOR III: PEOPLE

Cluster G: Building collaborative relationships

6. Collaborates

DEFINITION

Building partnerships and working collaboratively with others to meet shared objectives.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Cooperates with others to achieve shared objectives.
2. Considers others' interests as well as own.
3. Partners with others to get work done.
4. Gives credit for accomplishments.
5. Is trusted by others.

Negative

1. Misses opportunities to collaborate.
2. Puts own interests before others'.
3. Doesn't encourage communication between groups.
4. Doesn't give credit where it's due.
5. Prefers to work alone rather than with others.

Overuse

1. Too accommodating; takes too long to make a decision or is unable to make tough decisions.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Competitive edge

Senior executive

Price-of-admission

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Working across organizational boundaries...

1. Tell me about a successful experience you've had implementing something across organizational boundaries.
2. Describe a time when you ensured that a system or process enabled teamwork across organizational boundaries.

Building new relationships...

3. Tell me about a time when you built strong relationships where none previously existed.*
4. Describe a time you had to build partnerships to achieve a shared objective.*

Sharing credit...

5. Describe a time when a person or group did not get their share of credit.*
6. Describe a time when you were praised individually when others also contributed.*

Building credibility...

7. Describe a time you worked with multiple groups or people who had different interests.*
8. Tell me about a challenging situation when you worked to earn trust and credibility within your team.*

Collaborating to succeed...

9. Tell me about a time you succeeded in an initiative by collaborating with others.*
10. Describe a time when the only way to achieve your individual goals was to ask for help from others.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR III: PEOPLE

Cluster I: Influencing people

7. Communicates effectively

DEFINITION

Developing and delivering multi-mode communications that convey a clear understanding of the unique needs of different audiences.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Is effective with a variety of communication methods.
2. Listens attentively and actively.
3. Adapts approach to the audience.
4. Provides timely, helpful information.
5. Encourages expression of ideas and opinions.

Negative

1. Is unclear in written and verbal communication.
2. Doesn't adjust approach to suit audience.
3. Doesn't listen well to others' viewpoints.
4. Doesn't share information others need.
5. Is not timely with information they share.

Overuse

1. Spends too much time crafting messages; overinforms; emphasizes style over substance.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Price-of-admission

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Adapting approach to suit the audience...

1. Tell me about a time when you had to communicate something important to someone who did not understand your industry or function's language very well.
2. Describe a situation when you were leading a group who didn't know much about the task.*

Connecting with your audience...

3. Describe the best presentation you've ever given.*
4. Describe a time you were comfortable with what you communicated and felt you connected with your audience.

Helping others see key points quickly...

5. Tell me about a time when others were missing the key points in a discussion and you helped get things back on track.*
6. Tell me about a time you were involved in a task that required you to communicate clearly and quickly.*

Encouraging expression of ideas...

7. Tell me about a time you had to shut off a person in the audience or during a meeting who was talking too much or asking too many questions.*
8. Tell me about a time when someone said you weren't listening but you thought you were.

Using different methods of communication...

9. Describe a time you had to convey the same message through different methods of communication (for example, e-mail and presentation, or an in-person meeting and a phone call).
10. Tell me about a time when you had to communicate the same information to different audiences and had to vary your style for each.

*OK for campus

FACTOR I: THOUGHT

Cluster B: Making complex decisions

8. *Manages complexity*

DEFINITION

Making sense of complex, high quantity, and sometimes contradictory information to effectively solve problems.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Clearly defines the problem before acting.
2. Can see root causes.
3. Explores multiple sources for information.
4. Understands what's relevant/significant and what isn't.
5. Can see consequences of different options.

Negative

1. Sees things as more simple than they are.
2. Doesn't take time to define the essence of the problem.
3. Draws on limited sources of information.
4. Allows intuition to override the facts.
5. Disoriented by lack of an obvious solution.

Overuse

1. Analyzes problems too much; waits too long to act.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Competitive edge

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview questions

Developing a process to solve a problem...

1. Tell me about a time you came up with a process or procedure to solve a problem.*
2. Give me an example of your typical problem-solving approach.*

Failing to solve a problem...

3. Tell me about a time when your chosen solution didn't work, and you had to rethink the problem from scratch.*

4. Tell me about a time when you selected a solution that worked in the past, but it didn't work this time.*

Identifying root causes...

5. Describe a time you were faced with a complex problem and had to get to the essence in a short time period.*

6. Tell me about a time when you didn't spend as much time as you should have examining the data and root causes of a problem.*

Finding a problem harder than expected...

7. Tell me about a time you found a work problem to be significantly more complex than you initially thought.

8. Tell me about a time you had to solve a problem twice, when the first solution wasn't right.*

Making sense of complex information...

9. Describe a time you faced conflicting data about a problem and you weren't sure how to approach it.*

10. Tell me about how you analyzed information and options to solve a persistent problem.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR III: PEOPLE

Cluster G: Building collaborative relationships

9. *Manages conflict*

DEFINITION

Handling conflict situations effectively, with a minimum of noise.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Anticipates conflicts before they happen.
2. Steps up to conflicts, seeing them as opportunities.
3. Finds common ground and builds consensus.
4. Asks questions and listens closely.
5. Settles disputes equitably.

Negative

1. Avoids conflict.
2. Takes sides; doesn't take time to understand the issue.
3. Allows emotions to get in the way.
4. Pushes their own preconceived ideas or solutions.
5. Accommodates, wanting everyone to get along.

Overuse

1. Spends too much time in peacemaking or debate; pushes for resolution too soon.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Differentiator

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Handling conflict well...

1. Tell me about a time when you handled a disagreement or conflict well.*
2. Tell me about a time you saw a conflict coming and were able to avoid unnecessary disruption or interference.*

Telling people things they may not like...

3. Tell me about a time you had to tell somebody something they didn't like or didn't want to hear.*
4. Tell me about a situation where you had to push for an unpopular change.*

Resolving disagreements with others...

5. Tell me about a time when you restored harmony with someone you disagreed with and had distanced yourself from.*
6. Tell me about a time someone made you uncomfortable or irritated and it resulted in a disagreement.*

Getting two parties to agree...

7. Tell me about a time you had difficulty getting two people or groups to agree.*
8. Describe a time you mediated a high-tension situation.*

Stepping up to conflicts...

9. Tell me about a time when something went from a harmonious to a conflict-ridden situation.*
10. Tell me about a time when you avoided a conflict.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR IV: SELF

Cluster J: Being authentic

10. Courage

DEFINITION

Stepping up to address difficult issues, saying what needs to be said.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Able to take the heat; can stand alone.
2. Faces up to problems.
3. Provides direct and actionable feedback.
4. Takes on tough assignments.
5. Delivers difficult messages.

Negative

1. Not prepared to take a stand on important issues.
2. Shies away from challenging situations.
3. Uncomfortable giving honest, corrective feedback.
4. Avoids conflict.
5. Finds it difficult to express views directly.

Overuse

1. Seen as intimidating; doesn't recognize impact on relationships.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Differentiator

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Challenging someone in authority...

1. Tell me about a time when you disagreed with someone more senior, and offered a solution that actually worked better.*
2. Describe a time when you challenged someone in a position of authority.*

Disagreeing with the status quo...

3. Describe a time when you challenged an idea or approach.
4. Tell me about a time when you criticized the status quo despite some risks.*

Delivering a strong, negative message...

5. Tell me about a time when you were investigating something and had to report back negative news to higher management.
6. Tell me about a time you held back on something you later wished you had said.*

Challenging someone on an ethical issue...

7. Tell me about a time when you stepped in to defend someone (other than a direct report) whom you felt was being unfairly treated.
8. Tell me about a time when you challenged someone on an ethical or performance issue.*

Taking on challenging assignments...

9. Tell me about a time you accepted an assignment where the odds of success were against you.*
10. Describe an example of when you volunteered for a risky or challenging task that nobody else wanted to do.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR I: THOUGHT

Cluster A: Understanding the business

11. Customer focus

DEFINITION

Building strong customer relationships and delivering customer-centric solutions.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Does whatever is necessary to understand customer needs.
2. Develops product/service improvements based on customer feedback.
3. Establishes and maintains effective customer relationships.
4. Builds and delivers solutions that meet and exceed customer expectations.
5. Handles customers effectively.

Negative

1. Thinks they already know what the customer needs.
2. Doesn't consider customer feedback important in making product/service improvements.
3. Doesn't dedicate enough time or effort to building relationships with customers.
4. Focuses on internal activities instead of the customer.
5. Uncomfortable handling customers.

Overuse

1. Doesn't balance organization/customer needs; gives away too much.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Price-of-admission

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Retaining a customer you almost lost...

1. Tell me about a time when you almost lost a customer and had to turn the situation around.*
2. Tell me about a time when you exceeded a customer's expectations.*

Dealing with difficult customer requests...

3. Tell me about a time when you went the extra mile for a challenging customer.*
4. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with what you thought were unreasonable customer requests.*

Confronting customer problems...

5. Tell me about a time you were confronted with an internal or external customer problem.*
6. Describe a time when you found a customer problem especially difficult to deal with.

Changing approach due to customer input...

7. Tell me about a time when you changed your approach to customers based on their input.*
8. Tell me about a time you created a new service, process, or product based on customer feedback.

Gathering and using customer information...

9. Describe a time you obtained up-to-date information from a customer, and what you did with it.
10. Describe a situation where new insights about a customer paid off.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR I: THOUGHT

Cluster B: Making complex decisions

12. Decision quality

DEFINITION

Making good and timely decisions that keep the organization moving forward.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Objectively gathers information.
2. Knows what's relevant and what isn't.
3. Combines analysis, wisdom, experience, and judgment.
4. Recognizes that a 100% solution is not always needed.
5. Can make a decision based on incomplete information.

Negative

1. Makes quick decisions without needed analysis.
2. Doesn't clearly define the issue.
3. Relies too much on self and information readily available.
4. Feelings play too significant a role.
5. Not orderly in thinking.

Overuse

1. Overly confident in own judgment; strong need to be perfect or right; excessively methodical or slow.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Price-of-admission

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Making a major decision of high quality...

1. Describe a time when you made a major decision and were really pleased with the outcome.*
2. Tell me about a time when you made a significant decision but doubted yourself afterward.*

Making a quick decision, and a good one...

3. Tell me about a quick decision you made that turned out to be a good one.*
4. Tell me about a time when you irritated people with your speed of making decisions.*

Gathering information quickly...

5. Describe a time you had to make a quick decision and gather a lot of information in a short time frame.*
6. Tell me about a hasty decision you made and later regretted.*

Making difficult decisions...

7. Give me an example of a difficult problem you worked on and walk me through your decision-making process.*
8. Describe a time when you had to make a decision without all the information you wanted or needed.*

Getting feedback on decisions...

9. Describe a time you received useful feedback on a decision you made.*
10. Tell me about a time when you turned out to be right and others were wrong.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR III: PEOPLE

Cluster H: Optimizing diverse talent

13. Develops talent

DEFINITION

Developing people to meet both their career goals and the organization's goals.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Provides challenging, stretching work.
2. Uses a variety of methods to develop people.
3. Sets development goals aligned with organizational objectives.
4. Places a high priority on developing others.
5. Looks for developmental assignments across the organization.

Negative

1. Doesn't spend time developing people.
2. Goes with the easiest, not necessarily the best, development options.
3. Doesn't make use of available resources to develop people.
4. Doesn't give risky or challenging assignments.
5. Works with those who need the least help.

Overuse

1. Pushes people too far, too fast.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Differentiator

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Achieving success in developing others...

1. Describe a time when your efforts in developing someone worked out positively.
2. Give me an example of how you determine the most appropriate development path for someone.

Failing to develop someone...

3. Tell me about a time when your efforts in developing someone didn't work out as you had expected.
4. Describe a situation when you knew you should be developing others but didn't have the time.

Creating a strategic developmental process...

5. Tell me about a time when you were involved in what you think was a good development process.
6. Tell me about a time you created a development process to align with organizational goals and priorities.

Helping others exceed their expectations...

7. Tell me about a person you helped do something they didn't think they were capable of.*
8. Tell me about a significant challenge you provided for someone else.*

Developing junior individuals...

9. Describe a time when you coached or mentored people younger and less experienced than you were.*
10. Tell me about a time when you worked with an inexperienced person and started them down a road of accelerated development.

*OK for campus

FACTOR III: PEOPLE

Cluster H: Optimizing diverse talent

14 *Values* differences

DEFINITION

Recognizing the value that different perspectives and cultures bring to an organization.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Seeks to understand different perspectives and cultures.
2. Contributes to a climate of diversity.
3. Sensitive to cultural norms, expectations, and communication.
4. Learns from others who have different perspectives.
5. Avoids and challenges stereotyping.

Negative

1. Shows no interest in different perspectives and cultures.
2. Treats everyone the same without respect for differences.
3. Believes their way is the only way.
4. Not willing to learn from those who have different backgrounds.
5. Stereotypes people.

Overuse

1. Overzealously champions diversity at the expense of other priorities or results.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Competitive edge

Entry-level individual contributor

Mid-senior level individual contributor

Differentiator

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Understanding different perspectives...

1. Describe a time when you needed to build a relationship with someone very different from you.*
2. Tell me about a time when you or someone else felt unwelcome or uncomfortable in a group.*

Being sensitive to cultural norms...

3. Describe a situation when you worked with individuals from different cultures.*

4. Tell me about a time when you were uncomfortable with someone else's culture or when someone else's culture was imposed upon you.*

Avoiding stereotypes...

5. Tell me about a time when you overcame a stereotype you had formed.*

6. Tell me about a time when you fell into the trap of stereotyping someone.*

Leading diverse teams...

7. Tell me about a time you led a team that was diverse for one or more reasons; for example, culturally or generationally.

8. Tell me about a time when you were surrounded by people who were culturally diverse or different from you.*

Failing in a diversity initiative...

9. Tell me about a time when managing differences backfired and produced a worse outcome.

10. Tell me about a time when you managed a diverse group and the differences proved very challenging.

*OK for campus

FACTOR II: RESULTS

Cluster E: Managing execution

15. Directs work

DEFINITION

Providing direction, delegating, and removing obstacles to get work done.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Gives clear directions.
2. Assigns work based on skills and experience.
3. Monitors progress toward achieving goals.
4. Provides support and guidance as needed.
5. Steps in to remove obstacles as needed.

Negative

1. Doesn't provide clear goals or direction.
2. Doesn't provide support and guidance.
3. Doesn't measure progress in a structured way.
4. Is not supportive.
5. Is not proactive in removing obstacles.

Overuse

1. May micromanage or could be too liberal in giving authority.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Price-of-admission

First level leader or supervisor

Competitive edge

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Setting direction...

1. Tell me about a time when you involved others in a goal-setting process.
2. When you were in a leadership position, tell me how you organized the work load, set objectives, and checked in with people.

Delegating effectively...

3. Give me an example of how you divided up elements of a project or assignment for others to

work on.*

4. Describe a time when you delegated too much and it got you in trouble.

Keeping a project on track...

5. Give me an example of how you keep things on track in your group when everyone is very busy and facing a tight deadline.

6. Describe a time when you restored focus to a group that was confused or going in different directions.

Balancing guidance with empowerment...

7. Tell me about a time when you resisted the temptation to get involved in something you had asked someone else to do.

8. Describe a time when you delegated a task that only you had worked on or knew how to do.

Removing obstacles...

9. Describe a time when you had to remove a barrier in order for a team to continue work.*

10. Tell me about a time your team wasn't successful because of an obstacle preventing progress.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR III: PEOPLE

Cluster I: Influencing people

16. *Drives engagement*

DEFINITION

Creating a climate where people are motivated to do their best to help the organization achieve its objectives.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Knows what motivates people.
2. Considers motivators when aligning goals.
3. Empowers others.
4. Makes people feel their contributions matter.
5. Invites input from others.

Negative

1. Doesn't understand people's motivations.
2. Doesn't allow autonomy or flexibility.
3. Pushes and drives more than inspires.
4. Unwilling to share ownership.
5. Doesn't welcome ideas from others.

Overuse

1. Focus on motivating people outweighs achieving results.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Competitive edge

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Understanding others' motivators...

1. Give me an example of when knowing what made someone tick was critical.*
2. Give me an example that illustrates how you appeal to very different people when managing a work project.*

Empowering others...

3. Describe a specific time when you empowered others.
4. Tell me about a time your team should have felt empowered but didn't.

Energizing disengaged people...

5. Tell me about a time you had to energize a group of disengaged people.*
6. Tell me about a time you were on a dispirited team and helped to raise spirits.*

Connecting work to the bigger picture...

7. Explain how you've been able to get people to feel their work matters.
8. Give me an example of motivating a team who felt detached from the larger organization.

Inviting input from others...

9. Tell me about a time you had to make a decision between taking quick action and inviting others for input.*
10. Give me an example of how you created an environment where others could offer input.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR I: THOUGHT

Cluster A: Understanding the business

17. Financial acumen

DEFINITION

Interpreting and applying understanding of key financial indicators to make better business decisions.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Understands key financial indicators.
2. Applies financial analysis to decision making.
3. Uses quantitative and qualitative information to draw conclusions.
4. Transforms financial information into business intelligence.
5. Identifies and monitors financial indicators.

Negative

1. Doesn't understand financial terms of the business.
2. Doesn't make links between business elements and finance.
3. Doesn't use financial information when drawing conclusions.
4. Unable to extract business intelligence from financial data.
5. Not interested in monitoring financial indicators.

Overuse

1. Relies solely or rigidly on financial indicators.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Normative data are pending for Financial acumen.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Using financial acumen to inform decisions...

1. Tell me about a time you used financial analysis to evaluate a new strategy or business direction.
2. Tell me about a time you used your financial acumen to make the case for a new idea or strategy.

Understanding key financial indicators...

3. Give me an example of the financial impact of one of your decisions.
4. Tell me about a time your knowledge of key financial indicators resulted in a good decision.

Finding patterns in financial data...

5. Give me an example of when you made a decision informed by patterns you saw in financial data.
6. Tell me about a time you changed your mind about a direction after reviewing financial reports.

Making financial decisions...

7. Tell me about a time you made a decision based on findings from financial data.
8. Tell me about a time you had to weigh the short- and long-term financial consequences of a new initiative.

Learning from experience with financial data...

9. Describe a time you received feedback on a financial decision you made.
10. Tell me about a lesson you learned from working with financial data.

STRUCTURED PROBES (IF DIFFERENT FROM STANDARD).

For 10 use only Learnings and Application probes.

For other questions, use all probes.

FACTOR I: THOUGHT

Cluster C: Creating the new and different

18. Global perspective

DEFINITION

Taking a broad view when approaching issues, using a global lens.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Takes broadest possible view of an issue or challenge.
2. Thinks and talks in global terms.
3. Sees the organization in a global context.
4. Can describe impact of global trends on organization.
5. Views issues on a worldwide basis.

Negative

1. Thinks narrowly when addressing issues or solving problems.
2. Has strictly a home region/local perspective.
3. Shows little interest in global issues.
4. Doesn't appreciate impact of global trends on organization.
5. Prefers/expects that things are done the same worldwide.

Overuse

1. Overemphasizes a global lens when it doesn't apply to the current situation or benefit the organization.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Competitive edge

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Anticipating global trends...

1. Tell me about a time you anticipated the impact of a global trend.
2. Tell me about a global trend that will impact how your company or industry conducts business.

Thinking and acting globally...

3. Describe a time when your organization's existing way of doing business wasn't going to work for a new region.
4. Tell me about a time when the local approach to business proved more effective than the company's typical approach.

Liaising globally...

5. Describe a time you were able to build cooperation between two parties in an international setting.
6. Tell me about a surprising success you had because of your ability to work well with someone or some people from another country.*

Seizing global opportunities...

7. Tell me about an opportunity you seized to localize a global product or service.
8. Tell me about a time you took a broad, global view of a business challenge.

Serving international customers...

9. Describe a time you had to do something different, unusual, or out of the ordinary for an international customer.
10. Tell me about a time when a tactic you used wasn't appropriate in a given country or culture.

STRUCTURED PROBES (IF DIFFERENT FROM STANDARD).

For 2 and 4 use only the Learnings and Application probes.

For other questions, use all probes.

*OK for campus

FACTOR I: THOUGHT

Cluster C: Creating the new and different

19. *Cultivates* innovation

DEFINITION

Creating new and better ways for the organization to be successful.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Generates ideas that are new, different, and better.
2. Looks at problems in a new way.
3. Puts creative ideas into practice.
4. Encourages others to explore creatively.
5. Considers the value or market potential of new ideas.

Negative

1. Doesn't experiment with ideas; stays in comfort zone.
2. Doesn't embrace others' original ideas.
3. Narrow, conservative, and cautious.
4. Stifles creativity in others.
5. Doesn't see the value or potential of new ideas.

Overuse

1. Overwhelms others with ideas and innovation; focuses on change at the expense of efficiency and reliability.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Differentiator

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Creating interesting or novel ideas...

1. Tell me about the most unusual idea you've had that worked.*
2. Describe your most creative contribution to the organization.

Sizing up ideas for their value...

3. Describe a time when you sized up an idea for its value in the market or organization.
4. Tell me about a time when you participated in a failed attempt to innovate.*

Generating new ideas...

5. Tell me about a time when you came up with some new ideas to solve an old problem.*
6. Describe a time when you facilitated idea generating or brainstorming with others.*

Managing from idea stage to application...

7. Tell me about a time when you managed something from the idea stage to market or application.*
8. Tell me about a time when you brought another person's or group's idea to successful completion.

Identifying opportunities to innovate...

9. Tell me about a time you took a risk on a new product or solution and it paid off.*
10. Tell me about a time when you identified an opportunity to innovate during the early stages of a project or process.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR III: PEOPLE

Cluster G: Building collaborative relationships

20. Interpersonal savvy

DEFINITION

Relating openly and comfortably with diverse groups of people.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Relates comfortably with a wide variety of people.
2. Builds rapport in even the most difficult situations.
3. Makes a conscious effort to be tactful and diplomatic.
4. Builds constructive relationships with people similar to and different from self.
5. Tunes in to interpersonal and group dynamics.

Negative

1. Not effective in building relationships.
2. Engages with people in immediate work area only.
3. Uncomfortable interacting with people different from self.
4. Expresses views in a blunt or insensitive manner.
5. Doesn't show interest in others' needs.

Overuse

1. Places more importance on relationships and being liked than on getting results.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Competitive edge

Entry-level individual contributor

Differentiator

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Working with people different from you...

1. Tell me about a time when you worked with someone who was difficult to get along with.*
2. Describe a situation that illustrates how you made yourself approachable and friendly to people who were more junior in the organization.

Building new relationships...

3. Tell me about a time when you built strong relationships where none previously existed.*

4. Tell me about a time when you got to know a new coworker (or classmate*).

Adapting interpersonal style quickly...

5. Tell me about a time when you changed your interpersonal style midstream because something wasn't working.*

6. Tell me about a time you changed your approach in a group situation, such as a meeting, presentation, or debate, based on the interpersonal dynamics in the room.*

Using tact/diplomacy to build trust in tense situations...

7. Describe a time you needed to use diplomacy and tact to maintain relationships in a tension-filled situation.*

8. Describe a situation where you facilitated or encouraged a climate of trust and respect between coworkers.

Drawing on interpersonal dynamics...

9. Describe a time when you used your diverse business network to help you meet the responsibilities of your job.

10. Give me an example of how you built rapport when you met a new contact.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR III: PEOPLE

Cluster G: Building collaborative relationships

21. *Builds networks*

DEFINITION

Effectively building formal and informal relationship networks inside and outside the organization.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Builds strong formal and informal networks.
2. Maintains relationships across functions.
3. Draws on multiple connections for ideas.
4. Consciously connects people to achieve goals.
5. Uses networks to broaden knowledge.

Negative

1. Doesn't build strong relationships with different groups.
2. Doesn't know whom to contact for resources or knowledge.
3. Restricts interaction to those in immediate area.
4. Doesn't seek opportunities to make connections.
5. Doesn't link others into his/her network.

Overuse

1. Relies on networking at the expense of other skills and responsibilities.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Competitive edge

Senior executive

Differentiator

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Building relationships...

1. Tell me about a time when you built strong relationships that stemmed from a difficult situation.*
2. Tell me about a time you removed barriers to get others to build relationships across organizational boundaries.

Benefitting from a network...

3. Tell me about a time when you benefited from a partnership with someone outside the

organization.

4. Give me an example of a time when having a strong network inside the organization worked well for you.

Learning from a network...

5. Describe a time when you used your network to exchange ideas, resources, and know-how.*

6. Tell me about a time you used your network to gain knowledge for one of your projects.

Using a network to influence...

7. Tell me about a situation when you used your connections to shape an initiative.*

8. Describe a time you were able to prevent a problem or conflict by reaching out to your network.*

Connecting others...

9. Tell me about a time you needed to connect people in order to accomplish a goal.*

10. Give me an example of connecting two people who previously didn't know each other.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR IV: SELF

Cluster L: Being flexible and adaptable

22. Nimble learning

DEFINITION

Actively learning through experimentation when tackling new problems, using both successes and failures as learning fodder.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Analyzes successes and failures.
2. Likes a new challenge.
3. Makes connections to arrive at the right solution.
4. Has a questioning, experimental approach.
5. Gets to the essence and extracts learning.

Negative

1. Stays in comfort zone.
2. Gives up too soon.
3. Doesn't incorporate lessons learned from success/failure.
4. Doesn't use a variety of approaches.
5. Doesn't experiment or test solutions.

Overuse

1. May take unnecessary risks for the sake of learning.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Competitive edge

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Analyzing past behavior...

1. Tell me about a time you did something in a different way following reflection on a previous experience.*
2. Tell me about a time you learned from your success.*

Learning from mistakes...

3. Tell me about a time you analyzed a failure in order to promote team learning.
4. Describe a time when a mistake or failure directly led to a successful solution.

Experimenting to find a solution...

5. Describe an experimental approach you took to solve a problem.*
6. Describe a time when you had to try multiple times in order to find the right solution.*

Learning quickly...

7. Tell me about a time when you took a risk and quickly applied what you learned.*
8. Tell me about a time when you had to learn something new very quickly.*

Persistence in learning...

9. Describe a time when you convinced colleagues to keep experimenting until a viable solution was found.
10. Tell me about a time when you were energized to find the ideal solution.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR III: PEOPLE

Cluster I: Influencing people

23. Organizational savvy

DEFINITION

Maneuvering comfortably through complex policy, process, and people-related organizational dynamics.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Deals comfortably with organizational politics.
2. Knows who has power, respect, and influence.
3. Knows how people and organizations function.
4. Sees potential issues ahead of time and deals with them.
5. Understands other groups' priorities.

Negative

1. Doesn't navigate political complexities well.
2. Doesn't consider relationship between different areas' goals.
3. Poor at building relationships.
4. Impatient with processes and makes political errors.
5. Not assertive enough.

Overuse

1. Too political; manipulative.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Differentiator

Entry-level individual contributor

Mid-senior level individual contributor

Competitive edge

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Knowing how organizations function...

1. Tell me about a time when your knowledge of how to maneuver through an organization worked really well for you.
2. Describe a time you helped someone new to the organization understand the way things really work around there.

Implementing something across boundaries...

3. Tell me about a successful experience you've had implementing something across organization boundaries.
4. Tell me about a time you worked with multiple groups or people who had different ways of operating.*

Gaining approval for key initiatives...

5. Tell me about a time you got something approved that impacted a larger part of the organization.
6. Tell me about a time when you gained approval for something by being politically sensitive.*

Dealing with negative issues...

7. Tell me about a time when you helped mediate a power struggle between two people or two groups.*
8. Describe a time you had to deliver bad news to a group or management.*

Disagreeing with those with power...

9. Tell me about a time when people more senior than you didn't agree on what you should be doing.
10. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with policies you felt were unnecessary.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR III: PEOPLE

Cluster I: Influencing people

24. Persuades

DEFINITION

Using compelling arguments to gain the support and commitment of others.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Wins support through appropriate positioning.
2. Convinces others to act.
3. Negotiates effectively in tough situations.
4. Maintains relationships while winning concessions.
5. Gains commitment through finding common ground.

Negative

1. Overpowers others with his/her views.
2. Doesn't negotiate to achieve win-win.
3. Doesn't provide a logical foundation for views.
4. Backs down in tough situations.
5. Is negative regarding input of others.

Overuse

1. May come across as manipulative or overly competitive.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Differentiator

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Winning support...

1. Describe a time when you needed to share a compelling argument to get others to agree to an idea or proposal.*
2. Tell me about a time you got approval for a new or revised policy/practice/procedure.*

Being diplomatic without making concessions...

3. Describe a situation you were in where you had to be diplomatic and forceful, but not make many concessions.*
4. Describe a time you had to consider another person's feelings without backing down on your own view.*

Maintaining relationships despite disagreements...

5. Tell me about a time when you brought two reluctant groups or individuals together.*
6. Describe a time you were involved in settling a disagreement and successfully maintained relationships.*

Finding common ground...

7. Tell me about a time you had to reach agreement with other parties when there was little trust.*
8. Tell me about a time when you served as a mediator either formally or informally.*

Responding to others' ideas...

9. Tell me about a time you disagreed with someone and brought them around to your way of thinking.*
10. Describe a time you changed your mind after hearing the other side of an argument.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR II: RESULTS

Cluster E: Managing execution

25. Plans and aligns

DEFINITION

Planning and prioritizing work to meet commitments aligned with organizational goals.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Aligns objectives with organizational goals.
2. Prioritizes critical tasks.
3. Plans allocation of resources precisely.
4. Develops contingency plans.
5. Uses milestones to track progress.

Negative

1. Does not have a clear purpose.
2. Reacts to immediate needs and neglects priorities.
3. Fails to estimate resources.
4. Doesn't have contingency plans in place.
5. Doesn't track progress or performance effectively.

Overuse

1. Inflexible to change; overplans when action is required; only focuses on mission-critical issues.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Price-of-admission

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Planning a complex task...

1. Tell me about a time when you planned and organized a complex task or project from start to finish.*
2. Tell me about a time when your lack of planning got you in trouble.*

Staging activities effectively...

3. Tell me about a time when you divided a plan into phases and detailed tasks to organize and accomplish the objectives.*
4. Describe a time when a project plan was so high level or general that it was difficult to execute.*

Planning for uncertainties or problems...

5. Describe a time you were setting goals and needed to plan for uncertainties or problems.*
6. Tell me about a time when you stumbled because you didn't anticipate a roadblock/obstacle.*

Establishing objectives and milestones...

7. Describe a time you established objectives and a plan that aligned with organizational priorities.
8. Give me an example of a project you managed where setting milestones and measuring progress was critical.

Prioritizing critical tasks...

9. Tell me about a time you had to change plans during a project/task you were doing to prioritize something unexpected.*
10. Tell me about a time when you ran out of time and had to choose what to finish.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR IV: SELF

Cluster L: Being flexible and adaptable

26. *Being resilient*

DEFINITION

Rebounding from setbacks and adversity when facing difficult situations.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Demonstrates confidence under pressure.
2. Stays positive when faced with adversity.
3. Deals with crises effectively.
4. Stays composed and forward thinking when faced with setbacks.
5. Learns from difficult experiences.

Negative

1. Loses composure in high-pressure situations.
2. Loses energy and motivation in stressful situations.
3. Defends against critical feedback.
4. Slow to recover from setbacks.
5. Doesn't learn from adversity.

Overuse

1. Overconfident; minimizes severity or learning potential of adverse situations.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Competitive edge

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Staying confident under pressure...

1. Tell me about a time when you felt under extreme pressure, but managed to carry on.*
2. Tell me about a time you were under pressure to back down, but stood firm.*

Handling a crisis...

3. Describe a crisis you had to handle.*
4. Give me an example of how you handled an emergency situation.*

Dealing with setbacks...

5. Tell me about a time when someone or something caught you by surprise and caused your goals

to be blocked.*

6. Tell me about a time when you became defensive or irritated and were able to successfully regain your focus.*

Staying positive...

7. Tell me about a time when a project or initiative seemed like it was going to fail.*

8. Tell me about a time when you absolutely knew you were right but someone in power overruled you.*

Handling hardships...

9. Describe how you dealt with a hardship assignment or situation (for example, layoffs, legal/regulatory battles, trouble with unions).

10. Give an example of how you rebounded from of a negative work experience.

*OK for campus

FACTOR II: RESULTS

Cluster D: Taking initiative

27. Resourcefulness

DEFINITION

Securing and deploying resources effectively and efficiently.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Can juggle many resources to get things done.
2. Gets the most out of resources.
3. Uses knowledge of structures and processes to get what's needed.
4. Adapts quickly to changing resource requirements.
5. Secures resources others can't.

Negative

1. Is frustrated by having simultaneous resources to handle.
2. Doesn't know where to go for resources.
3. Is inefficient when plans are disrupted.
4. Doesn't think creatively to get what is needed.
5. Relies on the same resources repeatedly.

Overuse

1. Tries to obtain too many resources rather than use what exists; uses resources inefficiently or wastes them.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Price-of-admission

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Starting something from scratch...

1. Tell me about a time when you were given a project you'd never done before.
2. Tell me about a time you had to start something from scratch.

Projecting resource needs...

3. Tell me about a time you had to project funding and resources to accomplish a set of goals.
4. Describe a time someone asked you for help to figure out resources for a project.

Securing resources in the organization...

5. Describe a time when understanding the organization's culture aided in securing or deploying needed resources.
6. Tell me about a time when organization politics prevented you from securing resources you needed.

Dealing with resource allocation issues...

7. Tell me about a time you were prevented from doing something because you couldn't get others to share their resources with you.*
8. Describe the most complex allocation of resources problem you have ever faced.

Adjusting to changing resource requirements...

9. Give me an example of a time when you were faced with a challenge due to a change in resource requirements.*
10. Tell me about a time you obtained fewer resources than you had planned or hoped for.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR II: RESULTS

Cluster F: Focusing on performance

28. *Drives results*

DEFINITION

Consistently achieving results, even under tough circumstances.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Sets high standards to achieve goals.
2. Pursues tasks with energy and drive despite obstacles and setbacks.
3. Has a strong track record as a high performer.
4. Pushes self and helps others achieve results.
5. Always puts in extra effort to meet deadlines.

Negative

1. Doesn't push hard for results.
2. Is an inconsistent performer.
3. Often misses deadlines.
4. Gives up too easily; doesn't try different strategies to achieve results.
5. Does the minimum required.

Overuse

1. Goes for results at any cost.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Price-of-admission

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Getting results despite external shifts...

1. Tell me about a time you got results even though some major factor changed, such as a budget cut, competitor move, or market shift.
2. Tell me about a time when you got results when others tried and failed.*

Being assigned to a fix-it...

3. Talk about a time you were assigned to a fix-it or turnaround assignment.
4. Tell me about a time you stepped in during a project to help the team achieve its goals.*

Exceeding expectations...

5. Tell me about a time you got results that far exceeded your own expectations.*
6. Tell me about a time when you got results that far exceeded others' expectations.*

Pushing harder than those around you...

7. Describe a time when you drove yourself harder than you were driving your people.
8. Describe a time when you pushed harder for results than others around you.*

Championing an abandoned cause...

9. Describe a time you championed a cause that others had abandoned.*
10. Tell me about a time when you just had to give up and move on to something else.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR IV: SELF

Cluster K: Being open

29. *Demonstrates self-awareness*

DEFINITION

Using a combination of feedback and reflection to gain productive insight into personal strengths and weaknesses.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Able to describe his/her strengths and weaknesses.
2. Seeks feedback from a wide variety of sources.
3. Views criticism as helpful.
4. Doesn't get defensive when receiving feedback.
5. Willingly admits mistakes.

Negative

1. Unable to describe his/her strengths and weaknesses.
2. Doesn't reflect on own behavior/actions.
3. Doesn't seek feedback.
4. Defensive; deflects feedback.
5. Surprised by impact he/she has on others.

Overuse

1. Overthinks critical feedback; doesn't make meaningful changes.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Competitive edge

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Learning about strengths and weaknesses...

1. Describe when or where you learned the most about your strengths and weaknesses.*
2. Tell me about a time when your understanding of your strengths or weaknesses was helpful to you.*

Receiving significant negative feedback...

3. Talk about a time you received significant negative feedback.*
4. Tell me about a time a performance review did not go as well for you as you had expected.

Receiving positive feedback...

5. Describe a time you were given positive feedback.*
6. Tell me about a time you made a change after receiving positive feedback.*

Admitting shortcomings...

7. Tell me about a time when you had to admit to your boss that you weren't very good at something.
8. Tell me about sharing one of your weaknesses with someone else.*

Seeking feedback...

9. Tell me about a time you asked someone to give you feedback.*
10. Tell me about a time when you were surprised or confused about how someone viewed you.*

STRUCTURED PROBES (IF DIFFERENT FROM STANDARD).

For all of the questions above, omit the Actions and Thinking probes. Replace the Outcome probe with the following probe: "What did you realize about yourself?" (Listen for specifics, not generalizations.)

*OK for campus

FACTOR IV: SELF

Cluster K: Being open

30. Self-development

DEFINITION

Actively seeking new ways to grow and be challenged using both formal and informal development channels.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Open to a variety of ways to develop/grow.
2. Shows energy for and commitment to personal growth.
3. Looks for stretching assignments.
4. Makes the most of available development resources.
5. Takes responsibility for learning new skills.

Negative

1. Low level of motivation to develop/grow.
2. Avoids stretching assignments.
3. Comfortable with current skill level.
4. Doesn't tap into available development resources.
5. Doesn't believe people really change.

Overuse

1. Jumps from one self-help solution to another.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Competitive edge

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Taking a job that required new skills...

1. Tell me about a time you took a job or assignment that required new or different skills.*
2. Describe what you have done to improve your career options.*

Identifying and neutralizing weaknesses...

3. Give me an example of when you compensated for one of your weaknesses with other skills you have.*
4. Tell me how you identified and were able to work around a personal weakness.*

Pursuing personal and professional development...

5. Give me an example of what you are currently working on for personal or professional improvement.*

6. Describe actions you took that contributed to your personal or professional development.*

Employing various ways to learn and grow...

7. When seeking to develop a specific skill in the past, what tactics or action steps did you include in your development plan?

8. Describe something you've learned or developed from other people (a boss, peer, colleague).

Learning from experience...

9. Describe the most developmental work experience you've had.*

10. Describe a situation where a prior strength actually turned out to be a weakness in another setting and how you addressed this.*

STRUCTURED PROBES (IF DIFFERENT FROM STANDARD).

For 5 use only the Thinking probe.

For other questions, use all probes.

*OK for campus

FACTOR IV: SELF

Cluster L: Being flexible and adaptable

31. Situational adaptability

DEFINITION

Adapting approach and demeanor in real time to match the shifting demands of different situations.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Flexible and adaptable; changes behavior easily.
2. Selects best approach for the situation.
3. Picks up on situational cues and adjusts accordingly.
4. Understands impact of situational and group dynamics.
5. Balanced; doesn't overdo any behavior.

Negative

1. Inflexible; behaves too much in one way.
2. Doesn't see changing situational demands.
3. Overvalues consistency across different situations.
4. Can't easily shift behavior or position.
5. Doesn't understand interpersonal dynamics.

Overuse

1. Too flexible and inconsistent, therefore confuses people, or behavior is misinterpreted.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Differentiator

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Adapting behavior to be more effective...

1. Give me an example of a situation where you had to adjust your style to get something done.*
2. Tell me about a time your role in a group wasn't effective, so you changed the way you worked with them.*

Picking up on situational cues...

3. Describe a time when you watched people closely to see how they were reacting to you.*
4. Tell me about a time when you were not sure why people were acting a certain way toward you.*

Understanding group dynamics...

5. Tell me about a time when you were a newcomer to a group or organization and how you learned to fit in.*
6. Describe a time when you adapted your style due to the people around you.*

Realizing that old ways no longer work...

7. Tell me about a time when you realized a style you had used in the past wasn't working anymore.*
8. Tell me about a time when you changed your style and approach midstream and went a different direction to get something done.

Responding to feedback...

9. Describe a time when you changed your approach based on feedback.*
10. Tell me about a time when you were advised to adapt your style in certain situations.

*OK for campus

FACTOR I: THOUGHT

Cluster B: Making complex decisions

32. *Balances stakeholders*

DEFINITION

Anticipating and balancing the needs of multiple stakeholders.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Understands internal and external stakeholder needs.
2. Balances the interests and expectations of different stakeholders.
3. Treats all stakeholders fairly and ethically.
4. Interacts frequently and broadly with stakeholders.
5. Is proactive in shaping and influencing stakeholder expectations.

Negative

1. Doesn't take the time to understand stakeholder needs.
2. Focuses on the needs of a limited number of stakeholders.
3. Considers some stakeholders' interests more strongly than others'.
4. Doesn't interact with stakeholders effectively.
5. Doesn't act fairly in handling conflicting stakeholder demands.

Overuse

1. Too focused on stakeholders at the expense of making timely decisions or addressing day-to-day matters.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Normative data are pending for Balances stakeholders.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Anticipating stakeholder concerns...

1. Tell me about a time when you anticipated stakeholder needs and concerns.*
2. Tell me about a time you did not gather enough input from all the stakeholders during a project.*

Working with external stakeholders...

3. Tell me about a time when you had to work with external stakeholders to get business results.
4. Describe a time when you could have worked with external stakeholders better.

Balancing different interests...

5. Tell me about a time multiple stakeholders disagreed on a course of action and you had to find middle ground.*

6. Tell me about the most difficult stakeholder you have had to manage.*

Acting fairly...

7. Tell me about a time you had to change a process or procedure to make it fair for everyone.

8. Describe a time when you had to factor competing stakeholder perspectives into a decision.

Managing stakeholder expectations...

9. Describe a time when you had to make a high-stakes decision that took into account different stakeholder needs.

10. Give me an example of when you needed to manage expectations of stakeholders whose views were different from your own.

*OK for campus

FACTOR I: THOUGHT

Cluster C: Creating the new and different

33. Strategic mindset

DEFINITION

Seeing ahead to future possibilities and translating them into breakthrough strategies.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Sees the big picture.
2. Anticipates future trends and implications.
3. Able to pose future scenarios.
4. Can articulate pictures and visions of possibilities.
5. Able to link vision with action.

Negative

1. Applies narrow thinking; can't see the big picture.
2. Tactical; prefers to stick to the here and now.
3. Overly focused on short-term action.
4. Contributes little to strategic discussions.
5. Doesn't create a road map from present to future.

Overuse

1. Is overly big-picture oriented and future focused, ignoring present-day realities; too theoretical.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Differentiator

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Developing a strategy and anticipating trends...

1. Describe a time you had to develop a strategy that would create value for your organization or customers.
2. Tell me about a time when anticipated future trends impacted your strategic plans and decisions.

Developing a strategy with others...

3. Give me an example of working with a team in charge of creating a new vision and strategy.
4. Describe a time when you were part of an organization or group and thought the strategy was lacking or inadequate.

Posing future scenarios and possibilities...

5. Give me an example of exploring various scenarios and possibilities when charting a course for the future.
6. Describe some possibilities you imagine for the future of your industry or organization.

Revising strategy during implementation...

7. Tell me about a time you were implementing a strategy and had to revise it or change direction due to changes in the competitive landscape.
8. Tell me about a time when you developed a viable competitive strategy, but due to forces outside your control, the strategy could not be fully implemented as planned.

Realizing the outcomes of being strategic...

9. Tell me about a time when your strategic vision or big-picture thinking was an asset.
10. Tell me about a time when it was difficult to anticipate issues that had an impact on your strategy.

STRUCTURED PROBES (IF DIFFERENT FROM STANDARD).

For 6 use only the Thinking probe.

For other questions, use all probes.

FACTOR III: PEOPLE

Cluster H: Optimizing diverse talent

34. *Builds effective teams*

DEFINITION

Building strong-identity teams that apply their diverse skills and perspectives to achieve common goals.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Rallies people around common goals.
2. Gets the right talent mix.
3. Shares wins and rewards team effort.
4. Shares information; good communicator.
5. Encourages open dialogue and collaboration.

Negative

1. Doesn't create a common mindset.
2. Doesn't assemble the right talent.
3. Doesn't create synergies in the team.
4. Rewards individual effort rather than team achievement.
5. Doesn't keep people informed.

Overuse

1. Emphasizes teaming behavior too much; individuality is lost or performance suffers.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Differentiator

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Leading cross-functional teams...

1. Describe a time you led a cross-functional team.
2. Describe a time you had to put together a team from scratch to accomplish an organizational goal.

Getting the team focused on common goals...

3. Tell me about a time you were in charge of a team and needed to get them focused around common goals.*
4. Tell me about a time you had to prioritize the team's goals over your own personal goals.*

Leading a team with poor talent...

5. Tell me about a time you were in charge of a team that didn't have the talent to get the job done.
6. Tell me about a time you encountered a team member who was dragging down the effectiveness of the team.*

Leading a high-performing team...

7. Tell me about a time you worked with a high-performing group or team.*
8. Give me an example of when your team accomplished something exceptional and it was up to you to reward the group.*

Dealing with a dysfunctional team...

9. Tell me about a time when you had to revitalize a stagnant team.*
10. Describe a team experience when the members didn't work well together.*

Improving one aspect of the team's performance...

11. Give me an example of a time you increased a team's effectiveness or productivity.*
12. Tell me about a time you improved team spirit or morale.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR I: THOUGHT

Cluster A: Understanding the business

35. Tech savvy

DEFINITION

Anticipating and adopting innovations in business-building digital and technology applications.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Proactively researches new technologies.
2. Is comfortable learning and adopting new technologies.
3. Experiments with a wide range of technologies.
4. Applies new and emerging technological options that will enhance organizational outcomes.
5. Encourages others to learn and adopt new technologies.

Negative

1. Prefers to stick with past, familiar technologies.
2. Slow to adopt new technologies.
3. Doesn't have experience with key technology tools.
4. Uncomfortable trying new approaches through technology.
5. Doesn't promote the benefits of learning and adopting new technologies.

Overuse

1. Lacks patience/tolerance for those less technologically capable, or pushes for new technology when it is not feasible.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Price-of-admission

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Picking up new technology successfully...

1. Describe a time when picking up a new technology worked really well for you.
2. Tell me about a time when you implemented a new technology.*

Linking technology improvements to outcomes...

3. Give me an example of a new technology that caused major issues for customers.
4. Give me an example of a new technology you proposed that had a positive impact on the organization.

Learning new technology...

5. Tell me about the biggest technological challenge you have ever had to overcome.*
6. Give me an example of how you enhanced your performance with a new technology.*

Being an early adopter of new technology...

7. Tell me about a time when you were an early adopter of a new technology.*
8. Describe a time when you taught someone else a new technology.*

Resisting new technology...

9. Tell me about a time when not picking up a new technology caused difficulty for you.
10. Tell me about a time you resisted new technology.

*OK for campus

FACTOR IV: SELF

Cluster J: Being authentic

36. *Instills trust*

DEFINITION

Gaining the confidence and trust of others through honesty, integrity, and authenticity.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Shows consistency; actions match words.
2. Treats others with respect; is direct and truthful.
3. Keeps confidences.
4. Follows through on commitments.
5. Operates with honesty and integrity.

Negative

1. Actions do not match words.
2. Discloses for personal gain and advantage.
3. Doesn't keep confidences.
4. Doesn't always keep promises.
5. Is not open and transparent.

Overuse

1. Overly direct; discloses too much, to the point of disruption; pushes trust to the degree that it seems inauthentic.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Price-of-admission

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Acting consistently...

1. Describe a time when it was challenging for you to practice what you preached.*
2. Give an example of when you chose to be true to your own values rather than do what was told or expected.*

Gaining trust...

3. Give me an example of how you gained others' confidence when you worked with them for the first time.*
4. Describe a time when you decided to give someone the benefit of the doubt.*

Keeping confidences...

5. Tell me about a time you were asked to disclose something that someone asked you to keep secret.*
6. Describe a time someone told you something in confidence, but you felt you needed to tell someone else.*

Operating with integrity...

7. Tell me about a time when you publicly admitted a mistake or failure.*
8. Tell me about a time when you were asked to do something you thought was unethical.*

Following through on commitments...

9. Describe a time you started up and ran with an idea/project, no matter what got in your way.*
10. Describe how you handled a situation where you were unable to follow through on a commitment.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR III: PEOPLE

Cluster I: Influencing people

37. *Drives vision and purpose*

DEFINITION

Painting a compelling picture of the vision and strategy that motivates others to action.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Creates an inspiring picture of the future; communicates passionately.
2. Helps people relate to the vision.
3. Builds commitment and enthusiasm for the vision.
4. Demonstrates personal commitment to the vision.
5. Optimistic; talks about possibilities.

Negative

1. Can't create a clear picture of the future.
2. Has trouble looking forward; more comfortable with present.
3. Can't communicate to enthuse and inspire people.
4. Doesn't help others understand the vision.
5. Words and deeds don't connect with vision.

Overuse

1. May get too far ahead of others or dismiss current realities.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Differentiator

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Communicating a new direction...

1. Tell me about a time you communicated a new direction for a group or business.*
2. Tell me about a time when a vision message you delivered was rejected.

Helping others relate to the vision...

3. Tell me about an occasion when you gained buy-in for your vision.*
4. Tell me about a time when you had to figure out how to get your vision across to remote locations without going there.

Demonstrating personal commitment...

5. Tell me about a time when you had to champion an organization's vision that you didn't fully agree with.

6. Tell me about a time when you made changes to your workgroup's purpose or direction to fit the organization's vision.

Energizing an unenthusiastic group...

7. Tell me about a situation when you were leading an unenthusiastic group and needed to energize them.*

8. Tell me about a time when you inspired people to stay with the team or organization by sharing your sense of purpose or vision.

Working with a group to develop a vision...

9. Describe a time when you worked with a group to develop their mission and vision.*

10. Tell me about a time you managed a group/unit that was headed one way and you felt they should be going another.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR II: RESULTS

Cluster E: Managing execution

38. *Optimizes work processes*

DEFINITION

Knowing the most effective and efficient processes to get things done, with a focus on continuous improvement.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Positive

1. Creates processes to get work done.
2. Focuses on continuously improving processes.
3. Separates and combines tasks into efficient, simple workflow.
4. Considers the whole system.
5. Designs processes and procedures that allow managing from a distance.

Negative

1. Disorganized.
2. Struggles figuring out effective processes to get things done.
3. Pays little attention to process improvement.
4. Doesn't capitalize on opportunities for synergy and efficiency.
5. Looks at processes in isolation rather than full system.

Overuse

1. Can't stop tinkering; overlooks the human element of process.

COMPETENCY INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Competitive edge

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Simplifying a process...

1. Describe a time when you found yourself caught in an inefficient process and had to figure out a better way.*
2. Tell me about a time when you re-engineered a process you originally designed.

Working with someone else's process...

3. Tell me about a time you critiqued other people's workflow processes and found a better way.*
4. Tell me about a time when you modified a process someone else designed.*

Designing processes for global or virtual work...

5. Describe a time you revised a process for virtual employees.
6. Give me an example of a work process or procedure that you implemented across geographical locations.

Demonstrating continuous improvement...

7. Tell me about a time when your attempt at improving quality worked out really well.
8. Tell me about a time you were part of a major quality improvement effort.

Considering the whole system...

9. Describe the impact of a work or process improvement you made.
10. Tell me about a time you were faced with processes, systems, or workgroups that were delivering poor quality.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR: N/A

Cluster N: Doesn't inspire or build talent

101 *Poor administrator*

A PROBLEM

Has low detail-orientation. Lets things fall through the cracks. Overcommits and underdelivers. Misses key details. Forgets undocumented commitments. Has to scramble to pull things together at the last minute. Moves on without completing the task.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Not a Problem

1. Well organized.
2. Stays on top of everything important.
3. Plans effectively.
4. Tracks the detail effectively.
5. Delivers on project commitments.

A Problem

1. Leaves things unfinished.
2. Poor time management.
3. Disorganized.
4. Doesn't set sound priorities.
5. Overlooks important details.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Reaching the limits of your administrative skills...

1. Tell me about the job that pushed you to your administrative limits.
2. Tell me about a time when you got overloaded with workplace obligations.

Scrambling to meet deadlines...

3. Tell me about a time you needed to scramble to meet a deadline.*
4. What do you do when you hit a time crunch and there's a chance you won't make it? Can you give me an example?*

Failing to deliver on key commitments...

5. Tell me about a time when you were unable to deliver on a key commitment.*
6. Tell me about a customer or boss who had a very high expectation for on- time delivery.

Working on projects that go off course...

7. Tell me about a project you worked on that got off course.*
8. Tell me about a time when you and the team got sidetracked into detail that turned out not to be that important.

Having to pay careful attention to detail...

9. Tell me about a project that required very careful attention to detail.*
10. How do you go about staying organized? Can you give me an example?

*OK for campus

FACTOR: N/A

Cluster M: Trouble with people

102. Blocked personal learner

A PROBLEM

Is closed to learning new personal, interpersonal, managerial, and leadership skills, approaches, and tactics. Prefers staying the same, even when faced with new and different challenges. Is narrow in interests and scope. Uses few learning tactics. Doesn't seek input. Lacks curiosity. Is not insightful about self.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Not a problem

1. Eager to learn something new.
2. Proud about learning new things.
3. Well read; diverse interests; wide-ranging experience.
4. Embraces new challenges.
5. Motivated by the new and different.

A problem

1. Closed to new learning opportunities.
2. Sticks with what's comfortable.
3. Resists personal change.
4. Applies the same solutions over and over again.
5. Does not see problems as opportunities for learning.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Learning new things...

1. Can you give me an example of something completely new that you have learned to do lately?*
2. Tell me about a new skill or piece of knowledge you've recently acquired.*

Learning to do things differently...

3. What do you do differently today as a manager that you didn't do in your earlier career?
4. What have you changed over the years because of feedback you have received?

Keeping knowledge and skills up-to-date...

5. How do you typically try to keep your knowledge and skills up-to-date? Can you give me an example?*

6. Tell me about a time when your knowledge and skills were insufficient for solving an important problem.*

Learning challenging things...

7. What is the most difficult new thing you have had to learn to be effective and successful? How did you do it?*

8. Tell me about a time that you got negative feedback about something you thought you were quite good at.*

Being slow to adopt something new...

9. Tell me about a time you were slow to adopt a new trend or technology.*

10. Tell me about a time when others rushed to adopt something new and untested and you held your ground with what works.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR: N/A

Cluster M: Trouble with people

103. *Lack of ethics and values*

A PROBLEM

Lacks the necessary sensitivity to the operating ethics and values of the organization. Operates too close to the margins. Pushes the limits of tolerance. Doesn't operate within the norms.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Not a problem

1. Acts in line with organizational values.
2. Applies values consistently across people/situations.
3. Demonstrates sound judgment on ethical matters.
4. Uses norms and standards to make choices and guide behavior.
5. Achieves results without compromising values.

A problem

1. Operates at the margins of normally accepted behavior.
2. Bends the rules to suit personal needs.
3. Does what he/she needs to in order to get what he/she wants.
4. Walks a thin line between resourcefulness and marginal ethics.
5. Makes up the ethical rules along the way to get things done.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Perceiving clashes between personal and organizational values...

1. Tell me about a time when you perceived that your personal values clashed with the organization's values.
2. Have you ever worked in an organization where you felt your ethics and standards didn't fit well enough? How did you react?

Changing ethics...

3. How have your ethics changed over your career? What changed them?
4. Were you ever in a situation where a new senior executive came into the organization and started to shift the norms and ethical standards of the company? How did you react?

Having bosses with different values...

5. Tell me about a time you had a boss who didn't share the same values.

6. Tell me about a time when others saw your values differently than you did.*

Being in the minority on ethics and values...

7. Tell me about a time when you were part of a meeting to define ethics and values and found yourself in the minority on an issue.

8. Tell me about a time you felt pressured to compromise your ethics.*

Feeling held back by the organization's norms and ethics...

9. Tell me about a time when you felt the norms and ethical standards of your company were holding back progress and success.

10. Tell me about a time you felt you were justified in bending the rules.*

*OK for campus

FACTOR: N/A

Cluster N: Doesn't inspire or build talent

104. Failure to build a team

A PROBLEM

Doesn't believe much in the value of teams. Doesn't pull the group together to accomplish the task. Delegates pieces and parts. Doesn't resolve problems within the team. Doesn't share credit for successes. Doesn't celebrate. Doesn't build team spirit. Treats people more as a collection of individuals than as a team.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Not a problem

1. Encourages participation and cooperation.
2. Delegates broadly.
3. Identifies commonly shared goals.
4. Fosters open communication.
5. Listens patiently to team members.

A problem

1. Does everything himself/herself.
2. Doesn't identify shared goals.
3. Doesn't build a common mindset.
4. Makes decisions without team input.
5. Rewards only individual effort/results.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Being on teams that have difficulty collaborating...

1. Tell me about a team where members had difficulty working collaboratively.*
2. Tell me about a team where members were highly competitive with each other.*

Inheriting dysfunctional teams...

3. Tell me about a dysfunctional team that you inherited.
4. What's the worst team you have had to manage? How did you approach the situation?

Dealing with low team morale...

5. Tell me about a time when team morale hit a low.*
6. Tell me about a team member who was a high performer but who caused trouble inside the team.*

Building team spirit while under pressure for results...

7. Tell me about a time when pressure for results got in the way of building team spirit and morale.*
8. Tell me about a team you managed where two people on the team just couldn't get along together.

Leading teams struggling to find focus and direction...

9. Tell me about a team you led that was struggling with finding focus and direction.
10. Tell me about a time that you lacked confidence in the abilities of your team members.

*OK for campus

FACTOR: N/A

Cluster N: Doesn't inspire or build talent

105. Failure to staff effectively

A PROBLEM

Does not assemble skilled staff either from inside or outside the organization. Uses inappropriate criteria and standards. May select people too much like self. Is not a good judge of people. Is consistently wrong on estimates of what others may do or become.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Not a problem

1. Has an eye for talent.
2. Sees beyond surface characteristics and style.
3. Considers candidate fit with position/organization.
4. Has a sound set of standards and a profile to hire against.
5. Sizes up others accurately.

A problem

1. Hires mostly the same kind and style of people over and over again.
2. Doesn't interview accurately; judges on surface characteristics.
3. Compromises on quality to fill spots quickly.
4. Doesn't consider fit with culture or values.
5. Doesn't have a sound set of hiring standards.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Struggling to find the right person for a position...

1. Tell me about a time you struggled to find the right person to fill a position.
2. Tell me about a time when you needed to fill a position as soon as possible.

Evaluating candidates...

3. How do you typically evaluate whether or not a candidate will be a good hire? Can you give me an example?
4. How do you typically reach a final decision on hiring or not hiring a candidate? Can you give me an example?

Taking risks to hire candidates...

5. Tell me about a time when you took a significant risk to hire someone.
6. Tell me about a time you were at odds with others over a candidate.

Making poor hiring decisions...

7. Tell me about the worst hire you have ever made.
8. Tell me about a time you misread someone's potential.*

Disrupting team chemistry with new hires...

9. Tell me about a time that a new hire you made disrupted team chemistry.
10. Tell me about a time you decided to go inside or outside the organization to fill a key position and it turned out to be the wrong thing to do.

*OK for campus

FACTOR: N/A

Cluster O: Too narrow

106. Key skill deficiencies

A PROBLEM

Lacks one or more key job-required talents or skills needed to perform effectively.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Not a problem

1. Continually expands skill set.
2. Motivated by adding new skills.
3. Strives to continuously improve skills.
4. Quickly adopts new technologies.
5. Curious about new skills and perspectives.

A problem

1. Tries to get by without upgrading skills.
2. Doesn't keep skills up-to-date.
3. Lacks interest in self- development.
4. Not interested in expanding skills.
5. Narrow and very focused on current skill set.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Having your talents mismatched with the job...

1. Tell me about a time when your talents weren't a good fit for the job you were doing.
2. Tell me about a time when your knowledge and/or skills were insufficient to perform at a high level.*

Keeping skills up-to-date...

3. How do you ensure that your skills are kept up-to-date with developments in your field?
4. How do you typically respond to new developments in your field of expertise? Can you give me an example?

Attending developmental events...

5. Do you generally attend development events that teach new ways of doing things? Can you give me an example?
6. Tell me about a time you were skeptical of having to learn a new approach to doing things.*

Adapting to technology...

7. Tell me about a time when technology changed the way you had to do things.*
8. Have you ever had to speed-learn something new for you to be able to perform early in a job? Can you give me an example?

Learning new skills...

9. Have you ever learned a new skill just for the fun of it? Can you give me an example?*
10. How do you typically approach learning a new skill? Can you give me an example?*

*OK for campus

FACTOR: N/A

Cluster O: Too narrow

107. Non-strategic

A PROBLEM

Can't create effective strategies. Can't deal effectively with assignments that require strategic thinking. Gets mired in tactics and details. Prefers the tactical over the strategic, simple versus complex. Isn't a visionary. Lacks broad perspective.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Not a problem

1. Can craft a compelling vision.
2. Comfortable speculating about the future.
3. Can translate long-term trends into business propositions.
4. Intrigued by ambiguity and complexity.
5. Forecasts multiple scenarios.

A problem

1. Doesn't see the big picture.
2. Not a visionary.
3. Enjoys concrete, tactical, and operational challenges.
4. Can't create multiple future scenarios.
5. Has a narrow perspective.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Being questioned on strategy...

1. Tell me about a time when others questioned your strategic proposal.
2. Tell me about a time where you were successful convincing others your strategy was the right one.

Identifying strategic differences among competitors...

3. Tell me about the key strategic differences among competitors in an industry you have worked in. How did your organization position itself?
4. Tell me about a time when the need for short-term results threatened your long-term strategy.

Adjusting strategies midstream...

5. Tell me about a time you had to adjust your strategy midstream.*
6. Tell me about a time you formulated a strategy for a brand-new product or offering.

Formulating strategies...

7. How do you typically go about formulating a strategy? Can you give me an example?*
8. How do you typically go about sorting out your strategic possibilities? Can you give me an example?*

Doubting senior management's strategies...

9. Tell me about a situation where you doubted the soundness of a strategy senior management created.
10. Tell me about a time where the strategy you supported lost out to another.*

*OK for campus

Cluster O: Too narrow

108. Overdependence on an advocate

A PROBLEM

Has been with the same boss, champion, mentor, advocate too long. Isn't seen as independent. Others question whether he/she could stand up to a tough assignment or situation without help. Might not do well in the organization if the advocate lost interest, lost out, or left the organization.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Not a problem

1. Has performed well without having a strong supporter above them.
2. Doesn't depend upon advocates for guidance or direction.
3. Cultivates supporters throughout the organization.
4. Can perform on their own.
5. Easily switches bosses and advocates.

A problem

1. Uses advocate's power and position to get people to do things.
2. Is protected by an advocate.
3. Relies on advocate for guidance, answers.
4. Depends on advocate's connections to get ahead.
5. Has followed advocate through a number of jobs.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Having a strong supporter or advocate...

1. Tell me about a time when you had the advantage of having a strong supporter or advocate somewhere higher in the organization.*
2. Tell me about a time when you counted on the support of an advocate and they didn't come through.*

Having a strong supporter lose power...

3. Tell me about a time when you had a strong supporter or advocate lose face or power in an organization.
4. Tell me about a time when your ties to a boss impeded your career progress.

Having a supporter get you out of trouble...

5. Has a supporter or advocate ever helped you out of a jam you couldn't get yourself out of? Can you give me an example?*
6. Tell me about a time when your boss attempted to bail you out of trouble.

Losing a supporter...

7. Tell me about a time when you lost a strong advocate or supporter halfway through an important project.

8. Tell me about a time when you had a strong supporter or advocate depart the organization and leave you stranded.

Following a supporter to a different company...

9. Tell me about a time when you followed a boss or supporter from one company to another.

10. Tell me about a time when others perceived you as being too tight with your boss.

*OK for campus

FACTOR: N/A

Cluster O: Too narrow

109. Overdependence on a single skill

A PROBLEM

Relies too much on a single strength for performance and career progression. Uses the same core talent, function, or technology to leverage self. Acts as if they can make it all the way on one strength.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Not a problem

1. Actively looks to expand skill set.
2. Sees the value in building new skills.
3. Seeks exposure to different experiences.
4. Enjoys the challenge of learning new skills.
5. Can use a variety of skills depending on the situation.

A problem

1. Content with the skills they have.
2. Tries to get by on just one or a few skills.
3. Not interested in much outside of their area of specialty.
4. Really good at mostly one thing.
5. Enjoys doing basically the same thing over and over again.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Not having the right skills or experience...

1. Tell me about a time when your skills weren't a good match for what you needed to do.*
2. Tell me about a time when you lacked the requisite experience to do something well.*

Turning down opportunities...

3. Tell me about a career opportunity or experience you turned down that you now wish you had accepted.
4. Tell me about a time you had to decide whether or not to pursue a new career path.

Stepping outside your comfort zone...

5. Tell me about a time when doing something you wanted required you to step outside your skills comfort zone.*
6. Tell me about a time you had to stretch yourself in new directions in order to succeed.*

Applying strengths unsuccessfully...

7. Tell me about a time when applying your strengths didn't lead to an optimal outcome.*
8. Tell me about a time you missed out on an opportunity because your skill set wasn't broad enough.*

Succeeding with tried-and-true solutions...

9. Tell me about a time when the tried, the true, and the proven was superior to doing something new and different.*
10. What is one skill set that has served you well throughout your whole career? How have you applied it?

*OK for campus

FACTOR: N/A

Cluster M: Trouble with people

110. Political missteps

A PROBLEM

Can't get things done in complex political settings and environments. Lacks sensitivity to people and organizational politics. Doesn't recognize political due process requirements. Says and does the wrong things. Shares sensitive information and opinions with the wrong people.

THEMES TO LISTEN FOR

Not a problem

1. Knows what information to share and what to hold back.
2. See politics as a necessary condition in well-running organizations.
3. Sensitive to organizational values and norms of behavior.
4. Reads hidden agendas.
5. Carefully chooses words and language to lessen noise.

A problem

1. Has difficulty reading the political signs.
2. Speaks/acts without considering the setting.
3. Doesn't watch other people's reaction to what he/she is saying.
4. Uses language others find offensive and insensitive.
5. Shares too much and/or talks with the wrong people.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Being at the center of a political firestorm...

1. Tell me about a time you found yourself at the center of a political firestorm.
2. Tell me about a time you had to engage in political damage control.

Being discouraged by organizational politics...

3. Tell me about a time you left or considered leaving an organization or a team because you thought there was just too much politics.
4. Can you recall a time when politics got in the way of your performing your job? How did you respond?

Maneuvering through complex organizational politics...

5. Can you recall the most complex set of politics you have ever had to maneuver through? How did you respond?*
6. Tell me about a time when politics turned out to be more important than you originally thought.*

Committing unintentional political errors...

7. Tell me about the biggest unintentional political misstep you have ever committed.*
8. Tell me about the most challenging problem you have encountered when dealing with people from a culture you didn't know much about.*

Responding to political troubles...

9. How do you typically respond when you find yourself in political trouble? Can you give me an example?*
10. Tell me about a time you found yourself in the political minority on an important issue.*

*OK for campus

Related forms and evaluations

Here are all the related forms and evaluations aligned with the Korn Ferry Interview Architect™ tools.

Interview notes: This is the primary form for recording notes from the interview. Content includes probes, themes, rating, etc.

Learning agility evaluation: Use this summary evaluation to assess overall learning orientation at the conclusion of the competency-based interview. Consider all of the candidate's responses to all questions when completing the summary. Items on the right side of the page describe characteristics of more agile learners. Items on the left side of the page are more descriptive of passive, random, or non-learners.

Candidate summary evaluation: Use this summary evaluation to assess overall impressions of the candidate being assessed. This form will help facilitate the review discussion of a particular candidate by all those involved in the interview process. This form goes beyond just competency content to address things like functional/technical skills, cultural fit, development, etc.

Interview notes (stallers/stoppers version): This is the primary form for recording notes from the interview. Content includes: Probes, Themes, Rating, etc. This form specifically aligns to the language used in conjunction with the stallers and stoppers (A problem/not a problem, etc.).

These are available to you for download and print as needed within your organization:

www.kornferry.com/ia-resources.

Additional copies available online at www.kornferry.com/ia-resources.

For additional information, please contact Korn Ferry Global Products Group (GPG) at business_office@kornferry.com.

