

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE (FORMERLY WOODWORDS)

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Nineteen Great Interview Questions

In today's competitive market, hiring the right person for the right position is a key to business success. Many truss plants believe half of the people they hire do not meet their expectations. The costs of hiring the wrong individual are very high, both in hard costs (salary, training, etc.) and soft costs (lost team synergy, morale, etc.).

Developing good screening and hiring practices is an ongoing issue for every company. Fortunately, interview skills can be learned skills. Most of the final hiring decisions are a result of the personal interview. It is, therefore, very important that the person giving the interview be well prepared. At the conclusion of the interview, you should have a very good feel for how well the person fits the job, will work with your team, and will fit into the company.

The following questions are aimed at providing some additional insights and helping to uncover areas that may be important to you.

1. How did you prepare for this interview?
2. Describe our company culture as you see it? What problems or issues does that represent?
3. What kind of people do you find difficult to work with?
4. What kind of environment do you find difficult to work within?
5. What were the positives and negatives of your last job?
6. What were the positives and negatives of your last company?
7. What is the most difficult situation you have faced?
8. What is your greatest weakness? What have you done to improve it?
9. What kinds of decisions are most difficult for you?
10. Are you more of leader or a manager?
11. How have you benefited from disappointment?
12. How have you benefited from failures?
13. What are the reasons for your success?
14. Why do you think you did not have more success?
15. What was the last vacation you took?
16. What was the last book you read?
17. What was the last movie you saw?
18. How long would it take for you to become productive and make a contribution?
19. How can we get the best out from you?

These questions, as part of a well-structured interview process, can provide significant insight into the candidate. Best of all, it should get the candidate talking.

Other points to consider about interviewing:

1. Always check references.
2. Have supervisors and other co-workers interview the candidate.
3. Do not hire hastily or because you need to fill the position as fast as you can. Wait for the candidate that fits your culture and your needs.
4. Take good notes during the interview.
5. Analyze past hiring mistakes and make sure that the elements that were present in those interviews are not repeated.

Hiring mistakes cannot be eliminated, but by doing your homework they can be reduced. Your business will benefit with an improved culture.

Adapted from concepts garnered from Mel Kleiman of Humetrics, Personal Experience, The "FMI Management Newsletter," December 1993, and University of Wisconsin Business Management Coursework by Kirk Grundahl.

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