



OMS Report

Name: Smith, John
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Interviewing Questions - Motivation

The Following Report Will Help You Interview to Identify Candidate Motivation

When it comes to performance, very small differences in behavior can account for significant variances in results. In jobs where the outputs can be more easily measured, "A" players have been shown to outperform average producers by between 50 and 100%. As valuable as these reports on personality are, they should not be used without correlating information collected from interviews, other assessment procedures, and reference checks. It is this layering of information from multiple sources that enables you to identify candidate attributes and abilities with greater certainty and see the subtle differences in motivation and job-related behaviors that differentiate high potential candidates from those with less potential.

The limited and very focused interview questions contained in this report are designed to help you probe for and understand the motivation of this candidate. This is not a complete list of questions, and you should certainly include other questions in your interview(s) to address the full range of qualifications that you are seeking. The key to using these questions is to understand that different personalities use language differently, and the pattern of what they say and how they say it is a window that allows us to see some of their traits.

Motivation: Proactive or Reactive

Is this candidate an action-oriented self-starter who initiates or a more passive personality who waits for other people to initiate and who prefers analyzing to action?

This personality should demonstrate a high degree of initiative but communicate a need for structure as well. When you listen to the person talk, you should hear complete sentences with a personal subject ("I"), an action verb, and a tangible object. For example, "I sell cars, " or "I make investment decisions for 200 clients." The person talks about action, doing things, and making things happen - about being in control. You should see rapid talk, quick responses, and quick decisions in areas where the person has expertise.

Motivation: Hot Buttons

Another component of motivation is something we label "hot buttons" - what makes the person feel good, what gets the person enthused, and what is the person seeking from his or her work?

Choose between these two questions to probe for Hot Buttons:

1. What do you want in a job? Or
2. What is important about working?

A personality like this person has generally emphasizes pleasant job conditions, co-worker relationships, regular hours, security, etc. - factors that have more to do with the work environment than with personal accomplishment.



Motivation: Focus, Direction, and Organization

All of us fit somewhere along a continuum that goes from high achievement to high avoidance. But in a more general sense, we can categorize people as either achievement motivated or threat motivated. We are either energized by goals and motivated to achieve, or we are energized by threats, in which case we have difficulty focusing on goals and we are motivated where there are problems and negative situations.

To determine direction and focus, you first need to establish the motivating Hot Buttons as explained above. Then you follow up with this question:

What will having (Candidate's Hot Buttons as explained in their answer) do for you?

In response to that question, this person should emphasize situations to be avoided and to be steered around - situations to be excluded. This motivation is indicative of a personality who will have difficulty focusing on goals and priorities and who can easily be diverted by problems.

Motivation: Internal or External

Some people possess the self-sufficiency and self-reliance to decide for themselves what's right or what's wrong, what's good or what's bad, what's satisfactory or unsatisfactory, and what's an appropriate response compared to an inappropriate response to a situation. Their motivation comes from within, and regardless of the inputs they collect from others, they want to decide for themselves.

Other people seek external direction and guidance about rightness or wrongness, work quality, appropriate actions, or whatever matter they are handling. They cannot decide for themselves, and they seek continual direction and feedback.

To make this determination, you should ask:

How do you know that you have done a good job?

Your interview should reveal that this is an externally motivated person, so sample responses to the question might be, "When my boss tells me I have done a good job," or "If the report shows no errors for the month." Personalities like this need to be managed, need regular feedback on how they are doing, and prefer to work with goals and targets that are set by the manager or the organization.

Motivation: Options versus Procedures

Some people like to try new ideas and procedures, experiment with change, and seek better ways of doing things. These are "Options" people who are motivated when they are trying new things and experimenting.

Other people want established procedures and enjoy performing their tasks in the right way. They are uncomfortable outside of proven methods and routines, and are motivated when they can carry out their tasks exactly as planned within the procedures.

To find out where your candidate's preferences are, ask this question:

Why did you choose your current job?

Procedures people, the category in which your candidate seems to fit, live and communicate within the framework of procedures, rules and known ways. In response to the question, they tend to relate "how" they got their jobs rather than "why". Instead of talking about choices, they describe things happening to them.



For instance, "When I got out of school I kicked around for a while; then a friend suggested that I would make a good travel agent. I applied for a job and got it, " or "When I moved here I saw an ad for a restaurant hostess and applied. Even though I didn't have experience, they hired me." For Procedures people the rules and policies are fixed, non-negotiable, and must be followed.

Motivation: Managing Change

Change is a fact of life for all people, but not everyone enjoys change or comfortably handles change, let alone having the ability to initiate change.

To seek additional insight into how your candidate responds to change, ask this question:

What is the relationship between this job and your last job?

With this question you are seeking to understand how the person interprets the ambiguous word "relationship." How they express the relationship tells how they perceive change.

People who thrive on change, and this should describe your candidate, talk about changes, what's new and what's different, and they see change as total or absolute. For example, a response to your question might be, "It's very different. My responsibilities are much greater and a lot more fun." These people prefer rapid change, have a low threshold for boredom, and like to move on to new things.