



# Interview Guideline

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POSITION: Administrative Assistant

INTERVIEWEE:

DEPARTMENT:

INTERVIEWED:

MANAGER: Mark Horstman

CREATION DATE: 2011-07-20

INTERVIEWER:

DATE:

## INTERVIEW GUIDE OVERVIEW (DO NOT READ OUT LOUD TO CANDIDATE)

The purpose of this interview guide is to help you evaluate candidates. The questions shown here are drawn from a behavioral analysis of this position, conducted by you or a previous manager. Guidelines are suggested for evaluating the strength of candidates' answers.

We recommend you ask the questions *exactly as they are worded*. This is particularly important if multiple interviewers are interviewing 1 or more candidates (which we also recommend).

Please take notes in the space provided. *Write down what the candidate SAYS, rather than your impressions*. That will help you share the behavioral reasons for your conclusions and decision.

*Remember to be as pleasant and friendly as you can be.* You *can* deliver a demanding interview while also being polite and kind.

## INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

*(PLEASE READ THIS OUTLOUD)*

Thank you for interviewing with me today. Here at Manager Tools we use a behavioral interviewing style. I'll be asking a series of questions about experiences you've had and how you handled them. I've got a series of between 10 and 15 questions, and this might take us an hour, perhaps a little more time. Don't be surprised if others here ask you the same questions in other interviews - that's normal. We want to be sure that every person we hire has the same qualities that have made us so successful.

There will be times when I will ask you for more information, and don't worry, that's normal. I will be taking notes - please don't let it distract you. The way we'll do it is, first, I'll ask you some questions, and then I'll answer any questions you might have of me. When you're done with your questions, we'll finish up. I'm excited you're here - let's get started.



# Question 1

Describe a situation when you have successfully managed multiple projects simultaneously.

*What behaviors to look for:* Did the candidate keep all projects moving to hit deadlines? Was there haphazard allotment of resources to different tasks, with unproductive and unnecessary chaos?

## **WEAK**

Did not plan to address workload  
Did not deliver projects on time or budget  
Expresses dissatisfaction at having to manage  
Did not delegate or coach others to achieve goals

## **STRONG**

Has a clear method for managing multiple projects  
Delivers projects on time and budget  
Communicates regularly and methodically with others  
Uses team's skills to ensure goals are met

**NOTES:**



## Question 2

Tell me about your methods for following through on projects and details. How do you measure your success in this area?

*What behaviors to look for:* Did the candidate define goals in a measurable way, and then monitor actions according to those goals? Was there a vague statement of ideals that translated poorly into reality?

### **WEAK**

Project is less complex than reasonable for this role  
Details not proactively or methodically tracked  
Does not have a method for managing conflicting priorities  
Follows through only after aware of crises

### **STRONG**

Project complexity is significant for this role  
Follow through systems lead to improved performance  
Systematic approach reduces errors and delays  
Approach improves learning and future performance

### **NOTES:**



## Question 3

Tell me about a time when you have had to create and maintain detailed project plans and task lists. How did you go about this?

*What behaviors to look for:* Did the candidate construct realistic action plans, including all relevant resources, deadlines, timetables, etc.? Was there a rough outline that was vague, unrealistic, or otherwise unhelpful?

### **WEAK**

Details are less complex than reasonable for this role  
Method of tracking not appropriate to project type or size  
Detail could not be reused or accessed by others  
Tracking does not create proactivity

### **STRONG**

Project complexity equal/greater than required for role  
Tracking method was appropriate to complexity  
Tracking supports proactivity and improvement  
Detail could be reused or used by others  
Describes improvement mechanism

**NOTES:**



## Question 4

Describe a situation when you noticed a particularly important detail and had to alert others to its importance.

*What behaviors to look for:* Did the candidate initiate or show commitment to a systematic method for organization or record keeping? Was there ineffective record keeping, overconfidence in memory, or dependence on others?

### **WEAK**

Focused on wrong details  
Failed to communicate in a timely way  
Notified wrong people  
Message not received well or correctly

### **STRONG**

Saw the right details clearly  
Communicated in a way that highlighted the issue  
Communicated with recipient in mind  
Escalated communication appropriately if necessary

**NOTES:**



## Question 5

Tell me about a time when you needed to follow instructions accurately. How did you ensure that your work was correct?

*What behaviors to look for:* Did the candidate use the instructions/procedures as a matter of professional commitment to ensure that a job was done correctly? Was there rejection/avoidance of instructions/procedures?

### **WEAK**

- Did not remember instructions
- Did not ask questions or clarify
- Made errors left uncorrected
- Had to be prompted with repeated guidance
- Hid errors

### **STRONG**

- Took notes
- Asked for clarification
- Open with communications about questions and issues
- Validated assumptions
- Planned quality into the work
- Checked work for accuracy

**NOTES:**



## Question 6

Describe a situation when it's been necessary for you to create and maintain data accurately. What did you do to ensure the data began and remained accurate?

*What behaviors to look for:* Did the candidate take clear precautions such as proofing thoroughly, double-checking, verifying format consistency, etc.? Was there only a cursory spot check?

### **WEAK**

- No process
- Efforts were ad-hoc
- Errors were systemic
- Corrections were implemented case-by-case
- Denied responsibility for errors

### **STRONG**

- Built a clear process
- Implemented process deliberately
- Errors self-identified, corrected and communicated openly
- Validated data and work with external sources
- Verbally owned process and outcomes.

**NOTES:**



## Question 7

Tell me about a time where your communication with others - type, frequency, with whom, about what - helped you build rapport or create better relationships and outcomes?

*What behaviors to look for:* Did the candidate build from a casual exchange of information to an honest discussion of topics which reflected trust and mutual respect? Was there a lack of interest in interacting or building a warm relationship?

### **WEAK**

Only interested in other person for potential outcome  
Does not consistently build relationships  
Only calls when they want something  
Cannot demonstrate clear business benefit

### **STRONG**

Creates strategy for building relationships  
Articulates benefit of wide ranging relationships  
Gives before getting  
Maintains relationships without near term business gain

### **NOTES:**





## Question 8

Tell me about an effective relationship you have created and kept over a long period. How did you achieve that?

*What behaviors to look for:* Did the candidate use behavioral observation as the basis for assessment, along with caution and avoidance of over-interpretation? Was there a lack of awareness/sensitivity, perhaps dealing only with extreme indicators of feelings?

### **WEAK**

Long is less than 1-2 years  
Relies on other person to make contact  
Does not offer to give before getting  
Communicates in a limited way  
Has only internal relationships

### **STRONG**

Has a strategy for maintaining relationship  
Gives without prospect of getting  
Communicates in multiple ways  
Has relationships in different companies/industries  
Demonstrates different communication styles

**NOTES:**



## Question 9

What tools do you use to ensure your communication is effective? Can you tell me about a time when one of them worked particularly well?

*What behaviors to look for:* Did the candidate talk helpfully, perhaps reflecting preparation, an understanding of the problem, attention to timing, or conflict management? Was there an expression of negative feelings, such as attack or withdrawal?

### **WEAK**

Only one or limited ways of communicating  
No tailoring for audience  
Lack of message planning  
Singular delivery not flexible  
Did not achieve planned objective

### **STRONG**

Planned delivery carefully  
Considered audience thoroughly  
Rehearsed based on planning, message, and audience  
Planning led to excellent outcome  
Answers to questions tailored to audience member asking

### **NOTES:**



## Question 10

Describe a situation when you had to write something to persuade others.

*What behaviors to look for:* Did the candidate read and perhaps reread complex information (that would typically be covered by a college graduate working in a technical field) to ensure comprehension? Was there skill in reading and comprehending very basic instructions?

### **WEAK**

Limited plan or structure to writing  
Numerous errors in tone, spelling, grammar  
Poor planning led to excess length  
No clarity of goal  
Excessive use of non-standard vocabulary

### **STRONG**

Clear structure followed from message and objective  
Edited carefully and repeatedly  
Encouraged multiple inputs to help refine message  
Considered audience and time in creation  
Achieved objective

**NOTES:**



## Custom Question 1:

Take 3-4 minutes and tell me about yourself.

**NOTES:**



## Custom Question 2:

What's something you see about yourself as a potential weakness for this role?

**NOTES:**