
Key Selection Criteria (KSCs)

Definition: The key selection criteria (KSCs) are what you look for in the people you hire. They are the “can and will” criteria that most contribute to the positive performance on the job.

- Examples:**
- If you hire unskilled, entry level people you might want people who are:
 - Hard Working.* Needs and wants to be busy. Takes pride in putting in “a good day’s work,” in working hard.
 - Reliable/Dependable.* Adheres to work rules. Maintains acceptable record of absenteeism and tardiness.
 - If your people must work closely with each other and/or with your customers, you might look for people with strong:
 - Interpersonal Skills.* Relates well to superiors, peers, subordinates, customers. Is tolerant, understanding, and considerate of others. Handles conflicts in a calm, unemotional manner; controls any feelings of anger or hostility to others.
 - If you are selecting a supervisor or manager, you might want someone who is skilled in:
 - Performance Management.* Accepts responsibility for the performance of assigned staff. Establishes performance standards (with staff concurrence, as appropriate), monitors performance, gives feedback, and addresses performance problems in an effective and timely manner.

The KSCs are your person specification for the job, and the HIRING SMART™ System will give you the tools and techniques you need to evaluate applicants on each KSC.

Interview Guide for:

CLINICAL JUDGMENT

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: Exercises sound clinical judgment. Collects adequate information before making a decision. Uses resources appropriately to gain information. Knows when to seek assistance in making a decision. Understands and considers all principle factors – the “big picture” as well as the details – before making a decision. Knows when and how to communicate independent judgments to others.

- Ask:**
- “Tell me about the most difficult clinical decision you made recently.” Then, “Why was it difficult?” And, “On what basis did you make the decision?” And, “What was the result of the decision?”
 - “Tell me about the most difficult clinical decision you regret that you made - would make differently now.”
 - “Have you ever questioned or challenged a doctor’s order, or a hospital policy or procedure?” Then probe for examples of when the applicant challenges, and why.

Interview Guide for:

CONFRONTATION SKILLS

S **A** **W** **U***

Look for: Confronts subordinate's performance or behavior problems in an effective and timely manner. Addresses the issue while maintaining the pride, dignity, and self-respect of the individual. Provides negative feedback constructively.

- Ask:**
- “Many people prefer to avoid situations with others that may be unpleasant, like confronting unacceptable performance, or expressing a strong disagreement. A few people find it easy. How about you? Would you prefer to avoid such situations, or do you confront them easily?” Then, ask for examples.
 - “Tell me about the most difficult problem performer you have had to deal with.” Then, “How did you deal with this person?” And, “What was the result?”

Interview Guide for:

COMFORT WITH PRESSURE

S **A** **W** **U***

Look for: Deals effectively with pressure and stress on the job; is productive in a pressured environment.

- Ask:**
- “As you know, some people don’t like the pressure of tight deadlines and too much to do, while others thrive on it. How about you?”
 - “Describe a typical stress-producing situation in your present job.” Then, “What causes the pressure?” And, “How do you handle it?”

Interview Guide for:

DELEGATING SKILLS

S **A** **W** **U***

Look for: Uses subordinates appropriately to accomplish tasks. Is effective in selecting the right subordinate for the task, and in communicating both the assignment and performance expectations.

- Ask:**
- “How do you feel about the old adage, ‘If you want something done well, you’d better do it yourself’?”
 - “In your present job, what tasks do you do yourself, and which do you assign to your people?”
 - “On a scale of 1 to 10, with ten the highest, how would you rate yourself as a delegator?” Then, “What would you have to do to deserve a higher rating?”

Interview Guide for:

DETAIL ORIENTATION/TASK MANAGEMENT

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: Can effectively manage a workload that includes many detailed tasks, and may include frequent interruptions and changes in task priority. Completes all tasks in an accurate and timely manner. Employs whatever organization, planning, and systems are necessary to manage the workload effectively.

- Ask:**
- “Describe the main tasks, or activities, that you work on in your average workday.” Then “Which are the most important tasks, and which are least important?”
 - “How frequently is your work routine interrupted, when you have to stop what you are doing and do something else?” Then, “How dissatisfied do you think you would become if your work routing was interrupted more frequently?”
 - “Tell me about the last time an important task didn’t get done – fell through the cracks.” Then, “What should you have done to prevent that?”
 - “Have you ever worked at a task required following detailed procedures? How good were you at it? What did you dislike most about it?”
 - “How good are you at catching mistakes in your work?” Then, “What do you do that helps you catch your mistakes?” And, “Do you think you make more mistakes than most people, fewer, or about the same?” And, “Tell me about the biggest mistake you made on the job.”
 - “How do you plan your daily activities in your present job?”

Interview Guide for:

HIGH STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: Is committed and self-motivated to produce work that meets high standards for both quality and quantity. Works hard. Takes pride in doing a good job.

- Ask:**
- “What about your present work gives you a sense of pride?” And, “What have you accomplished in recent jobs that you feel proud of?” Or, “How important is it to you to produce work of high quality?” Then, “Give me some examples of recent work that you feel is high-quality.”
 - “Tell me about a situation in which your performance didn’t live up to your expectations.”
 - “How fast is the general pace of work in your office, in the group with which you work?” Then, “How does your pace compare?” And, “On a scale of one to five, with five being very fast, at what pace you prefer work?”
 - “Some people are content with doing just what is expected of them while others want to do more. How about you?” Then, “Tell me about the last time that you did more than was expected, or more than the job required.”

Interview Guide for:

HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: Recognizes when information must be confidential, and treats confidential information appropriately. Consistently provides truthful, reliable information to superiors. Does not falsify or withhold information to cover up mistake or an error in judgment.

- Ask:**
- “When do you think it’s O.K. to reveal something told to you in confidence?” Then, “Suppose, for example, a close friend told you in the strictest confidence that he has AIDS. Under what circumstances would you be tempted to reveal that information to someone else?”
 - “Some people find it difficult to admit they made a mistake or used poor judgment, particularly to a boss. How about you?” Then have the applicant support his/her response by asking, “Tell me about the last time you made a mistake or used poor judgment on the job.”

Interview Guide for:

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: Relates well to superiors, peers, subordinates, customers, etc. Is tolerant and understanding of others. Accepts others. Is rarely critical of others. Deals productively with people who are difficult, who have poor relationship skills.

- Ask:**
- “What rating do you think people who know you well would give you on interpersonal skills, on how well you get along with others?” Then, “How might they describe you?”
 - “Tell me about the most difficult person you have had to deal with.” Then, “How did you handle him/her?” And, “How successful have you been in dealing with him/her?”
 - “How frequently do you have to deal with someone you really dislike?” Then, “How do you do it?” And, “With what degree of success?”
 - “What annoys you the most about some of the people you work with?”
 - “What do you think your present and most recent supervisors would tell us about how well you get along with other people, with customers, bosses, and coworkers?” Then, “Tell me about the type of person you are least likely to get along with.”
 - “Think of someone with whom you do not get along that well. Why don’t you get along well with him/her?”
 - “What kind of person do you get along with best?” Also, “...worst?”

Interview Guide for:

NEGOTIATING SKILLS

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: Is highly motivated to make the best deal possible for the company. Exercises sound business judgment in negotiations. Knows willing-to-lose position and appropriate opening position. Can be firm and maintain a position when it is appropriate to do so. Skilled at packaging and presenting positions for maximum appeal to the other party. Uses good timing; knows when to make a move. Understands and practices a win-win approach to business negotiations.

- Ask:**
- “On a scale from one to ten, how would you rate your negotiating skills?” Then, “Tell me about some of your more successful negotiations.”
 - “Tell me about the most difficult negotiation you have had recently.” Then, “Why was it difficult?” And, “What was the outcome?”
 - “What have you found in your experience are the most important points to follow when negotiating?”
 - “Have you had any formal training in how to negotiate?” If the response is positive, the say, “Tell me about it.”

Interview Guide for:

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

S A W U*

Look For: Accepts responsibility for the productivity of assigned staff. Established performance standards (with staff concurrence, as appropriate), monitors performance, and gives feedback. Provides guidance, coaching, and training, as required, to subordinates who need to acquire knowledge and/or skills in order to meet performance standards.

- Ask:**
- “How satisfied are you with the productivity of your staff?” Then, “What influence do you have on that productivity?” And, “What have you done to improve it?”
 - “Tell me about the last performance evaluation you conducted with a staff member.” Also, “What were your objectives for the meeting?” And, “What did the meeting accomplish?”
 - “What have you done to develop your skills in managing your peoples’ performance?”

Interview Guide for:

PERSEVERANCE

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: Is not easily detracted from a goal. Overcomes obstacles. Is not easily defeated in the accomplishment of a goal.

- Ask:**
- “Tell me about the most difficult goal that you have accomplished.” Then, “What obstacles did you overcome to accomplish it?”
 - “Tell me about a goal that you did not accomplish and have abandoned.” Then, “Why did you abandon it?”
 - “Once you have set a goal or something that you want to accomplish, what does it take to get you to give it up?”

Interview Guide for:

PLANNING AND ORGANIZING SKILLS

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: Can plan and organize a complex workload or numerous tasks adequately to accomplish them in a reasonable time and with reasonable results.

- Ask:**
- “Let’s talk about your daily work routine. What tasks are high priority? What tasks are low priority?”
 - “How do you plan your daily activities in your present job?”
 - “How organized are you?” Then, “How do you organize your work in your present job?”
 - “Have you ever managed a complex project?” Then, “How did you plan and organize that project?” And, “What were the results?”
 - “Tell me about the last time an important task didn’t get done--- fell through the cracks.” Then, “What should you have done to prevent that?”
 - “Do you think you and your staff could be more effective if you planned and organized the work more than you do now?”

Interview Guide for:

PROBLEM-SOLVING/DECISION MAKING SKILLS

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: Accepts the challenge of problem-solving and does not give up easily without an acceptable solution. Uses resources and methods appropriately.

Skilled at generating sufficient facts and impressions, at analyzing them, and at reaching a reasonable conclusion. Compensates, as necessary, for personal bias and emotionality.

- Ask:**
- “Tell me about one of the most difficult problems that you have solved recently.” Then, “How did you solve it?” And, “Did you use any particular approach?”
 - “Tell me about the last problem that you gave up on. Why did you give up?”
 - “Do you follow a process or take any specific steps in making an important decision?” Then, “What steps do you take?”
 - “Tell me about the most difficult decision you have made recently.” Then, “Why was it difficult?” And, “On what basis did you make the decision?” And, “What was the result of the decision?”
 - “What decisions do you put off making?”
 - “What do you think your recent bosses will tell me about your ability to solve problems and make good decisions?”
 - “Tell me about the last time you had to make some fast decisions.”

Interview Guide for:

RELIABILITY AND DEPENDABILITY

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: Can be counted upon to complete duties and assignments in the agreed upon time and manner. Makes realistic commitments to others and delivers on them. Adheres to policies and procedures. Maintains a good attendance record, with minimum tardiness.

- Ask:**
- “Describe a recent situation in which you demonstrated that you are reliable, that you can be counted on to do what you say you will do.”
 - “Everyone has to take some time off from work occasionally. When did you last take time off?” Then probe to understand how much time was taken and why.
 - “What do you think your previous employers would tell us about your record of absenteeism and tardiness?”
 - “Someone has said that all policies and procedures were made to be broken, and there is some truth to that. How frequently do you find it necessary to bend a policy in your present job?”

Interview Guide for:

SERVICE ORIENTATION

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: Combines a friendly and personable style with a sincere desire to be helpful to others, i.e. to patients, their families, and to co-workers. Listens actively and questions as necessary to gain understanding of other's needs or interests. Provides appropriate assistance in meeting their needs or interests. Deals productively with people who are angry and upset: remains objective and conveys a genuine interest in helping.

- Ask:**
- “Tell me about any experiences where you have had to be of service to other people.” Then, “What did you like most about these experiences?” And, “What did you dislike most about them?”
 - “I find it difficult to always be friendly and courteous to others: sometimes I’m just in a bad mood. Do you feel that way sometimes?” Then, “Are you less friendly and courteous than you would like to be when you feel that way?”
 - “Do you have an approach for handling people who are angry and upset that works reasonably well?” Then, “How do you handle such people?”

Interview Guide for:

TEAM PLAYER

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: Works well in a collaborative environment. Establishes and maintains supportive, constructive, and responsive relationships with coworkers. Contributes to reaching group goals. Can subordinate self-interests to group interests.

- Ask:**
- “What annoys you the most about some of the people that you work with?”
 - “Tell me about an experience in which you worked with others as part of a group or team to accomplish a goal.” Then probe to understand about the group, the goal, and the applicant’s role.
 - “What rating do you think the members of that group would give you on a scale of one to ten, where ten is ‘extremely cooperative’ and one is ‘extremely uncooperative?’” Then ask why the applicant chose the rating s/he gave, and what s/he would have to do to be rated higher.

Interview Guide for:

TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: Uses time effectively. Prioritizes work appropriately. Focuses on the highest priority activities.

- Ask:**
- “On a scale of one to ten, with ten the highest, what rating would you give yourself on how effectively you manage your time?” Then, “How do you prioritize your work and manage your time?”
 - “Let’s talk about your daily work routine. What tasks are high-priority? What tasks are low-priority?” Then, “How do you schedule your activities?”

Interview Guide for:

DISSATISFIERS

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: These factors are any requirement or condition in the job or work environment that could be so dissatisfying to some people that either their performance suffers or they quit. Here are some common examples

- Excessive overnight travel requirements.
- Frequent involuntary overtime.
- Dull, boring, monotonous work.
- Present or future relocation requirements.
- Unsupportive, incommunicative management.
- Unstable work environment, frequent restructuring, layoffs.

First, look for any serious dissatisfiers in the job and/or work environment, factors that have caused people to quit. If there are any, define them and....

Look for applicants who:

- Do not express strong dissatisfaction with similar factors that they have encountered in other jobs.
- Are willing to accept the potential dissatisfier(s).

Ask:

- Preference questions, e.g., “What have you disliked most about previous jobs? What do you dislike most about your present job?”
- How applicants would react to a job that included any specific dissatisfier(s) in the job for which they are being interviewed.

Evaluate: Are any of the applicant’s strong dissatisfiers present in the job for which s/he is being interviewed? What is the applicant’s attitude toward the dissatisfier(s) in the job for which they are being interviewed.

Explain: The job in detail to all applicants, including any potential dissatisfiers. Discuss their reactions. If possible, let final applicants observe someone performing the job and talk privately with one or more people who are in it. The point is to minimize surprises that could cause applicants to quit because they do not like the job and/or the work environment.

Interview Guide for:

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: These are motivational factors that applicants must bring to the job. They are part of the applicant's work ethic and desire to produce a result of high quality.

Fast Paced. Works rapidly. Has a high energy level.

Hard-Working. Needs and wants to be busy. Takes pride in putting in a good day's work, in working hard.

High Initiative. A self-starter. Recognizes what should be done and does it. Initiates action. Proactive instead of reactive.

High Standards of Performance. Takes pride in the quality of goods or services produced. Is uncomfortable doing less than a high-quality job. Wants to excel.

- Ask:**
- "What do you think your boss will tell me when I ask how hard you work?" Or, "... how much initiative you have shown on the job?" Or, "... how conscientious you are?" Or, "... about your record of meeting deadlines?"
 - "How fast is the general pace of work in your office, in the group with which you work?" Then, "How does your pace compare?" And, "On a scale of one to five, with five being very fast, at what pace you prefer to work?"
 - "How busy are you during the average day in your present job?" How many breaks do you take in an average day?
 - "Can you give me examples of how have you shown initiative in your present job?"
 - "What about your present work gives you a sense of pride?" And, "What have you accomplished in recent jobs that you feel proud of?" Or, "How important is it to you to produce work of high quality?" Then, "Give me some examples of recent work that you feel is high-quality."

Evaluate: Strong applicants know that they work hard; they like to be busy. Some prefer a fast pace, but whether or not this is necessary for winning performance depends upon the job. Applicants with high initiative can describe how they have applied their initiative in recent jobs. Applicants with high standards of performance can point with pride to the results of their efforts.

Interview Guide for:

EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: Some people have a strong need for one or more of the following factors. If that need cannot be met in the work environment (i.e. the job, working conditions, boss, company culture, etc.), their performance usually suffers. Frequently they find another job that they hope will be more satisfying. Regardless, they will not be a winner in any job that does not meet their needs to a reasonable degree.

Financial Rewards: Has a strong drive to acquire money and/or what it will buy.

Advancement: Is ambitious, career oriented, wants opportunity for promotion (s).

Achievement: Needs to accomplish goals, to be able to get things done.

Challenge: Needs new tasks/assignments that present a test of skills and abilities, wants to learn, to develop new skills.

Power/Control: Has a strong drive to control people and situations.

Recognition: Needs to know that efforts and/or accomplishments are recognized and appreciated.

Responsibility: Wants to be held accountable for results of an assignment and have reasonable freedom in determining how to achieve those results.

Look for applicants who:

Are a good fit with the boss. Do not have any strong needs that the boss cannot meet, e.g., recognition, responsibility.

Ask:

- “Think of the best boss that you ever worked for and tell me what he did that made him good.” Then, “Think of the worst boss that you worked for and tell me what made him the worst.”
- “What characteristics do you think an ideal boss should have?”
- “How would you react to a boss who <describe any potentially negative characteristics of the boss for the job>?”

Evaluate: If there are any factors that the good boss supplied but the bad one did not, they may be a strong need. You can verify your assumption by asking, “How important is it to you that your boss <need>?” Rate the applicant weak on Will Criteria if there is a strong mismatch between his needs and what the boss can supply.

Interview Guide for:

EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION (CONTINUED)

S **A** **W** **U***

Look For: Fit the organization. Do not have strong motivational needs that the organization cannot meet.

- Ask:**
- “Think back to a situation where you performed at your best and tell me about it. Why did you perform at your best?”
 - “What do you think motivates you? What does it take to get you performing at your best?”
 - “What has frustrated you most in your present and previous jobs?”
 - “What has kept you from performing at your best in some situations?”
 - “If we get together on this job, where would you like it to lead? How ambitious are you?”
 - “What has been particularly challenging about your recent jobs? How much challenge do you want in a job?”

Evaluate: Are any of the factors listed on the preceding page strong motivators for the applicant? If they are, can the job and/or the overall environment meet them sufficiently to keep the applicant motivated to high levels of performance? Rate the applicant weak on Will Criteria if there is a serious mismatch between his needs and what the organization can supply.