FindingPotential

Interview Guide

Sales Manager

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Increase the probability of recruiting people who will succeed by collecting evidence from more than just an interview.

The FindingPotential Personality Questionnaire Competency Report provides an objective view of each candidate directly matched to this interview guide. Create a free account at www.findingpotential.com.

This report is based on a Managerial and Leadership Competency Model and is designed to help you identify the competencies that are most important for the role. The closer the fit between a candidate's competencies and the competencies in this report, the more likely they are to succeed in the role and feel engaged.

This report has 3 sections:

- **Competency Review**
  This section provides you with a rank ordered list of competencies. The ranking is based on your responses to the Job Profiler questionnaire.

- **Interview Questions**
  In the second part of this report you will find a series of suggested questions and a series of positive/negative indicators to help you probe and evaluate each candidates' responses. In most cases you will find questions and indicators for the top 5 competencies that you identified. However, you may have ranked some of the competencies as equally important – in these cases more than 5 competencies are shown.

- **Quick Tips**
  If you this is your first experience of a using a competency-based interview method you will find the "Quick Tips" section really useful - we would encourage you to read this section. Even if you are more familiar with this approach the tips are a great refresher. They include:

  - The Interview Plan & Timing
  - Introducing a Competency Based Interview
  - Using the Competency Based Interview Questions
  - Posing Great Questions
  - Assessing and Rating Candidates.

Please remember – you don't need to print the Quick Tips Section every time just select the page range you do need to print (Sections 1 & 2).

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As a result of completing the Job Profiler you have identified the following competencies, ranked in order of importance, as critical to the role. You should focus your interview on the top five ranked competencies (highlighted green). Remember it is possible you may end up with more than five competencies highlighted green where ties occur. Competencies highlighted in grey are less or not important to the role and are not needed.

Rank	Competency
1	Thriving in a Performance Environment
=	Effectively Executing the Task
3	Leading the Way for Others
=	Understanding the Commercial Context
5	Handling Pressure
=	Being Dependable and Taking Accountability
7	Relating to Others
=	Building Positive Working Alliances
=	Making Sound Business Judgements
10	Embracing Change and Ambiguity
11	Having a Thirst For Development

The following pages will now describe possible interview questions as well as positive and negative indicators for your top ranked competencies.

Consistently sets high standards and drives performance. Monitors progress, proactively overcoming barriers to success and quickly addressing underperformance.

Suggested questions

1. Describe your biggest achievement in your current role.

- Why do you feel it is such a big achievement/strong performance?
- What did this achievement require from you?
- What were the barriers to success? How did you overcome them?
- Why didn't you give up or take an easier option/path?

2. Describe a situation where you have had to sustain your energy over period of time to achieve.

- How did you organise yourself (planning, targeting, monitoring)?
- Why was it so important to achieve?
- How did you cope with the time pressures/flagging motivation/barriers?
- How did you monitor progress? What was the quality of the output?

3. Describe the standards that you use to monitor your work.

- What difficulties do you encounter in maintaining these standards?
- How do you measure your performance against these?
- How do you encourage a sense of standards in others?
- How do you ensure that you keep raising the bar on performance?
- What have you done when things have not been done to your satisfaction?

4. Can you tell me about a time when you have had to deliver a tough performance message to someone?

- How did you spot that there was an issue?
- How did you approach it? What was the response?
- How did you feel about doing it?
- What was the outcome? What feedback did you receive?

5. Describe a situation where you needed to be persistent and overcome significant barriers or obstacles to achieve.

- What were the barriers/objections? How did you overcome these?
- How effective were you? What were the outcomes?
- What did you learn from the experience?

6. What is the biggest stretch in your current performance goals/objectives?

- What is the goal/objective?
- What makes this a stretch?
- How was this goal created?
- How do you feel about this stretching goal?
- How are you currently doing against this goal/objective?

Consistently sets high standards and drives performance. Monitors progress, proactively overcoming barriers to success and quickly addressing underperformance.

Positive indicators

- Proactively overcomes barriers to success/achieving goals
- Sets high standards for self and others
- Takes the path that will deliver the best results rather than accepting the easier option/mediocre performance
- Consistently achieves goals. Pulls out all of the stops to make things happen
- Demonstrates the ability to sustain personal energy and motivation over a period of time to deliver results
- Exhibits a sense of urgency to get things done
- Builds responsibility and commitment from others so they sustain their energy and motivation over time
- Plans to succeed – takes a structured approach to planning and monitoring to increase chances of success
- Raises the bar on performance every day
- Quickly addresses underperformance in others
- Holds others accountable for performance and behaviour. Provides robust feedback to others on performance
- Speaks with conviction about the purpose of the team's work and the contribution that the team can make

Negative indicators

- Gives up easily or fails to proactively find ways to deal with issues/barriers to goals achievement
- Is not able to clearly articulate standards and success measures they set for themselves/others
- Delivers results by taking easier/more obvious paths – may not achieve excellence but delivers performance
- Puts in less effort rather than really pulling out the stops and making (personal) sacrifices to make things happen
- Fails to sustain energy/struggles to keep self focused and motivated to deliver results
- Is laid back. May not instil a sense of urgency
- Fails to instil the energy and commitment to maintain the motivation of others through tough and challenging times
- Is rather ad hoc in approach – No disciplines and checks to drive out performance/increase the chances of success
- Tolerates mediocre performance from self and others
- Fails to deal with underperformance in a timely manner
- Allows others to get away with unacceptable performance/behaviour
- Fails to see/help others appreciate the importance of their work and the contribution they can make

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Translates strategic goals into clear objectives and plans. Focuses on key priorities and ensures these are clear to others. Delivers high quality outcomes to time and budget. Regularly reviews progress and ensures appropriate risks and controls are in place.

Suggested questions

1. Even the most organised of us may overlook some of the details when planning an initiative. Tell me about a time when this happened to you.

- What was the situation? What were the consequences of this omission?
- How did you rectify the issue? What was the outcome?
- What have you learned from this?

2. Describe a situation where you had to translate a broad directive into tangible and specific goals.

- How did you go about doing this? Take me through the steps.
- How did you communicate the goals/objectives to others?
- How did you manoeuvre between the detailed plans & the bigger picture?
- How did you manage the risks? What contingencies did you put in place?

3. We are often faced with conflicting demands on our time. Give an example of when you have had to really prioritise.

- How do you know what to prioritise/that you were effective?
- How could you have increased your effectiveness?
- How did you ensure that others remained focused on the right things?

4. Describe a situation where you have questioned/challenged the use of your time.

- Why did you feel that this was not a legitimate use of your time?
- How did you communicate this? What was the outcome?

5. Describe a time where you have had to closely monitor progress to ensure a task was delivered to quality & time.

- Why was close management needed? What was the cost of failure?
- How did you go about it? How did this compare to your normal structures and processes for monitoring performance?
- What did you do when things started to go off track?
- How did you strike the balance between monitoring and micro-managing?

6. How are you performing against your current goals/objectives?

- What are your goals/objectives?
- How do you know how you are currently performing?
- Which goals/objectives are your main priorities?
- What would overachievement look like in relation to them?

7. Describe a time when you have fallen behind on a key goal/objective.

- What was the goal/objective?
- Why did you fall behind?
- What did you do to try to change the situation?
- What was the outcome and what did you learn from it?

Translates strategic goals into clear objectives and plans. Focuses on key priorities and ensures these are clear to others. Delivers high quality outcomes to time and budget. Regularly reviews progress and ensures appropriate risks and controls are in place.

Positive indicators

- Creates comprehensive plans to support the delivery of the wider goal – is clear on the why, what and how
- Includes detailed contingency plans for delivery. Anticipates and mitigates risk to plans
- Rethinks plans in the light of new information
- Keeps others informed and involved with necessary changes to plans so objectives remain clear and relevant
- Translates strategic goals into operational plans and objectives
- Able to manoeuvre between the bigger picture and the detailed plans
- Able to (re)prioritise and juggle priorities on the basis of new information/changing circumstances
- Establishes clear measures to ensure that self (team) are focused on value adding activity
- Manages self and own time effectively
- Communicates changes in priorities for others
- Puts clear structures and processes in place for monitoring and managing progress/performance
- Responds calmly when things go off track. Creates time to take stock and review when feeling under pressure to respond and deliver

Negative indicators

- Fails to appreciate the importance of planning and review to task delivery
- No evidence of contingency planning for changing circumstances/unforeseen issues or managing risk
- Limited ability/willingness to flax/deviate from plan in the light of new information and/or changing circumstances
- Fails to communicate changes to others in a timely manner. Leaves individuals without clarity on the plan
- Struggles to translate strategic goals/broader directives into tangible and workable operational plans
- Is more inclined to focus on the bigger picture or the detail of the plans – struggles to move between the two
- Fails to manage conflicting demands– lets priorities slip or become overloaded/ can't see the wood for the trees
- Promotes relentless activity with no means of ascertaining the value of tasks
- Fails to manage self/use of own time
- Fails to communicate changes in priorities to others
- No processes evident for managing progress/measuring performance to time, budget and quality
- Loses cool when things do not progress as expected – increases effort without tackling the source of the issue or checking the expected return on the increase in effort

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Creates a clear and compelling vision of the future, devolving accountability for delivery to the right level whilst offering appropriate levels of support. Drives performance through regular, honest feedback and by building a climate of openness and trust.

Suggested questions

1. How have you ensured that your team feel equipped to deliver the business plans in your area?

- How do you keep the team focused on the business goals/ensure they understand the link between their work and the wider company goals?
- How do you ensure your team feel empowered but not overloaded?
- How do you keep the vision real so it resonates with the team?

2. Give me an example of a time when you had to lead a de-motivated team or a team who were less enthusiastic/ committed to the task in hand.

- What did you do to keep spirits up and people focused on objectives?
- How were you sure that you had overcome the difficulties?
- What factors did you consider? What lessons did you learn?

3. Can you give me an example where, with the power of hindsight, you feel you may have pushed an individual or team too hard?

- What feedback did you receive from the individual/team at the time?
- What was the outcome? What might you have done differently?

4. Tell me about the last time you went out of your way to recognise an individual/the team for a job well done.

- Who did you give the feedback to? Where? Why was important to do this?
- When was the last time you sought feedback on your performance from your direct reports?
- How has this informed your leadership/management style and practice?

5. Describe a situation where you have been dissatisfied with your performance as a leader.

- What could/should you have done better?
- How have you used this learning to inform your style and behaviour?
- What do you see as your strengths and limitations as a leader/manager?

6. What is the vision and/or mission for your part of the organisation?

- Who created this and when? (If not them ask – What role did you play in creating this?)
- Why was it created?
- How does it align to the organisation's vision and mission?
- What does it mean to you personally?
- What have you done to engage your team with this?

Creates a clear and compelling vision of the future, devolving accountability for delivery to the right level whilst offering appropriate levels of support. Drives performance through regular, honest feedback and by building a climate of openness and trust.

Positive indicators

- Communicates a compelling vision/picture of the future to generate motivation/enthusiasm in others
- Keeps the team focused on the goals through establishing clear mechanisms for monitoring and reporting
- Devolves accountability to the right level and offers appropriate levels of support without micromanaging
- Provides differential recognition to others on the basis of objective measures of performance
- Ensures the team understand the need for change and that this resonates personally with them
- Provides an appropriate balance of support and challenge
- Checks with the team to ensure that they are feeling appropriately supported and challenged
- Recognises and rewards good behaviour and performance
- Adapts leadership style to suit the needs of the team and the circumstances
- Coaches others to help them perform. Raises awareness and generates responsibility for action in others
- Builds a climate of trust and openness where people are comfortable expressing their views and trying new things

Negative indicators

- Fails to engage others in the "why" or the longer term goal and get buy in and commitment
- No clear mechanisms for monitoring and reporting to track progress to goals
- Keeps hold of too much themselves (fails to empower the team) and/or micromanages the process
- Rewards and recognises others in the same way, irrespective of their personal performance/contribution
- No evidence of checking that the team see personal relevance of the change/direction and their contribution
- Fails to provide the right balance of support and challenge
- No evidence of seeking feedback from the team re the suitability/effectiveness of their management/leadership
- Provides only developmental feedback rather than praise and motivation to build confidence
- Has less flexibility in leadership style (e.g. struggles to take a directive stance or to collaborate/facilitate)
- Fails to coach – does the job for others. As such may not get (sustainable) performance improvements from others
- Creates a command/fear climate where teams are less comfortable expressing their views or trying new things

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Stays informed of trends and changes in the wider market place in which they operate. Identifies commercial business opportunities and takes action to realise these. Considers the longer-term implications of decisions.

Suggested questions

1. What do you do to ensure that you have all of the information you require to perform effectively in your role?

- Where do you get the information from? How does this assist you?
- How do you keep up to date with developments in/outside the business?
- Why is it important to do this?
- What do you see as the key challenges/changes in the industry over the next 5 years?

2. Describe a situation where you have had to balance strategic goals with short/medium term profit.

- How did you go about doing this? What was the outcome?
- Has there been a time where you have focused on a short-term win to the detriment of the long term?

3. Describe a situation where you have spotted and pursued an opportunity you knew could add value to the business.

- How did you spot the opportunity? What value would it add? Why?
- How did you get support for your plans? Who did you engage?
- How did you quantify the return on investment?
- How did your proposal differentiate your business from the competition?

4. Describe how your work impacts on other areas of the business.

- How do ensure that the strategies for these business areas are aligned?
- What is the consequence of not doing so?
- How do you engage other areas of the business in a timely fashion?
- How do you keep abreast of what is going on in other business areas?
- How have you amended your own strategy and plans to accommodate those of other business areas?

5. Customers are demanding higher quality from the products and services they are receiving. What efforts have you taken to anticipate and exceed customer's expectations?

- Give a specific example – what did you do?
- What feedback have you received?
- How will this support the business moving forwards?

6. What do you see as the main commercial opportunities in your area?

- What do you see as particular opportunities in these?
- What have you done to gain a competitive advantage in these areas?
- What risks do you see in exploring these opportunities?

Stays informed of trends and changes in the wider market place in which they operate. Identifies commercial business opportunities and takes action to realise these. Considers the longer-term implications of decisions.

Positive indicators

- Understands the industry, the market and the competition
- Stays abreast of trends/changes in the market place and applies these to their role
- Demonstrates a sound appreciation of the medium/long term challenges facing the business
- Has built a strong network and profile in the industry – seen as a thought leader
- Able to spot issues before they arise and presents solutions
- Able to anticipate and exceed customer expectations
- Considers the impact of their actions on employees, the organisation and its customers/clients
- Uses knowledge of the market/industry to spot new business opportunities
- Prepared to sacrifice short term gains for longer term sustainability/profitability
- Has the courage to pursue commercial opportunities where the potential benefits outweigh the cost of failure
- Appreciates how all parts of the organisation fit together and ensures activity is aligned
- Is cost and profit conscious

Negative indicators

- Limited understanding of the nature of the industry, the market and the competition
- Fails to keep self up to date with the necessary knowledge to perform in role
- Cannot articulate the key challenges/changes facing the business/industry
- No strong profile/network/reputation in their field or in the industry – has not capitalised on wider networking opportunities
- Takes a reactive approach to business issues. Fails to anticipate and take action to prevent these from occurring
- Reacts to, rather than anticipates, and fails to take action to exceed customer needs and expectations
- Is overly focused on results at the expense of staff, customer at the expense of commercials etc. – fails to balance all aspects of organisational performance
- No evidence of spotting new opportunities – ideas are more evolutionary than revolutionary and may not differentiate but rather keep up with the competition
- Focused on achieving results in the short term rather than longer-term sustainability/profitability
- Lacks entrepreneurial spirit/courage to pursue opportunities as a result of the potential cost of failure
- Narrow focus on improvement. This is limited to within own area, does not consider improvements across business units/areas
- Does not demonstrate an appreciation of costs and profit

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Remains calm and in control under pressure, staying focused on delivering results. Stands their ground when challenged and maintains a positive outlook when faced with setbacks.

Suggested questions

1. Describe a situation where you felt that unreasonable pressures/demands were being placed on you/your team.

- What did you do to help manage the pressure and demands?
- How successful were you? How do you know (feedback)?
- How did you minimise negative impact on performance?
- With hindsight what have you done differently when faced with demanding/pressurised situations?

2. Tell me about a crisis (at work) you have handled recently.

- What caused it? What did you do to resolve it?
- How were you feeling at the time? How did you manage your emotions?
- How did you ensure yourself/others coped through it?
- How did you know they were coping?

3. Sometimes our values and beliefs can be called into question by business decisions and we need to take a stand. Describe a time when this has happened to you.

- Why was it important for you to stand your ground?
- How comfortable did you feel doing this? How successful were you?
- What made you successful? What got in the way of success?
- What have you learned about yourself from this experience?

4. Give me an example of a significant setback that you have experienced in your role/career to date.

- How did this come about? What did you do? Why?
- To what extent were others aware of your feelings?
- How do you feel about the situation now?
- What would have helped you to pick yourself up more quickly?

5. How do you stay focused on the right things day to day?

- What are the right things? How do you know?
- What kinds of distractions exist in your environment?
- How do you guard against these? Give an example of a time you've done this well.

6. Tell me about a time when you have felt under real pressure to deliver results.

- What did you need to deliver?
- What was the pressure you faced?
- What did you do?
- What was the outcome?
- What did you learn about yourself?

Remains calm and in control under pressure, staying focused on delivering results. Stands their ground when challenged and maintains a positive outlook when faced with setbacks.

Positive indicators

- Remains calm and collected in difficult circumstances. Keeps control in stressful situations
- Maintains performance under pressure
- Adopts a range of effective coping strategies to deal with pressure (e.g. manages symptoms, re-frames, tackles the source)
- Recognises signs of stress/pressure in self and others
- Looks to ensure that others are equipped to deal with and supported through pressurised situations
- Responds constructively to challenge or when beliefs and values are called into question
- Prepared to stand ground in the face of opposition
- Persists with a course of action despite setbacks – shows tenacity in the pursuit of goals
- Remains a positive outlook in the face of setbacks and disappointments – sees them as an inevitable part of the process but learns and moves on
- Maintains focus when under pressure
- Manages distractions in the working environment and keeps self focused on performance goals

Negative indicators

- Becomes ruffled or emotional when under pressure – loses control when under stress
- Takes eye off the ball and becomes distracted/preoccupied when under pressure
- Uses a limited range of coping strategies or maladaptive coping strategies when under pressure (e.g. diet, exercise, sleep)
- Fails to spot signs of pressure in self and others
- Focuses on self when under pressure. Does not consider how to support others through pressure situations
- Responds disproportionately/inappropriately to challenge or when values and beliefs are called into question
- Does not stand ground or fails to challenge constructively
- Gives up easily – lacks tenacity when faced with setbacks
- Tends to dwell on disappointments or setbacks which can interfere with focus and performance
- Loses focus when under pressure
- Focuses on the wrong things – gets caught up in distractions and loses focus/attention

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Takes personal accountability for achieving goals and seeing things through to completion. Delivers what they commit to and can be trusted to maintain standards and quality.

Suggested questions

1. Give me an example of a time when you did more than was asked of you/exceeded expectation/went that extra mile.

- Why did you do it? How did this make you feel?
- What was the result of your efforts?
- What did you have to give lesser priority to in order to make that happen?
- With hindsight, what if anything would you do differently?

2. At times we all fail to deliver what is required or struggle to keep our motivation to see things to completion. Describe a time when this has happened to you?

- Why were you unable to deliver/what caused you to lose motivation?
- How did you feel? What did you do to try to overcome the problem?
- What feedback did you receive? What did you learn?
- What have you done to prevent the same situation occurring?

3. Sometimes getting a task finished on time means that quality is compromised. Can you give an example of a time when this has happened to you?

- What were the issues that you anticipated as a result of this?
- What did you do to address these issues? Who did you consult/inform?

4. Describe a situation where you have taken personal accountability for resolving an issue that may not have been yours to resolve?

- What made you act in this way?
- How did you ensure that you also delivered what was yours to deliver?
- What feedback did you receive?

5. How do you monitor quality and standards in your work?

- What measures are in place to allow you to do this?
- How were these measures developed?
- How have you used the feedback to assist you in providing quality/high standards in your work?
- What have been the benefits to the customer, to the business?

6. Tell me about a time when your part of the organisation has failed to deliver against its KPIs/key objectives.

- What were the KPIs/key objectives?
- Why weren't they delivered?
- What was the outcome/consequence?
- What feedback did you receive?
- On reflection, what would you do differently?

Takes personal accountability for achieving goals and seeing things through to completion. Delivers what they commit to and can be trusted to maintain standards and quality.

Positive indicators

- Takes personal accountability for performance and is prepared to go the extra mile/put self out when needed
- Owns issues – does not hide behind systems or processes or devolve accountability for others
- Appreciates the impact of choices on capacity to deliver across all aspects of the role. Clearly/effectively prioritises
- Shows determination to see things through to completion
- Takes the initiative to resolve issues that may hamper performance
- Appreciates the balance between delivering to time and delivering to quality standards and consciously works to get the right balance between these
- Considers the implications of decisions/actions for delivery quality and performance
- Delivers what they commit to – can be relied upon to deliver on promises
- Is focused on standards and quality of output
- Keeps a check on the quality and standards of work via formal and informal checks and measures

Negative indicators

- Lacks personal accountability – let things slip /leave issues requiring additional/discretionary effort unresolved
- Passes the buck on issues – hides behind systems or processes or places blame/accountability on others
- Misses the knock on implications of taking work on. Fails to re-prioritise other activity & may become over loaded
- Quickly loses enthusiasm or energy for a project/activity when the going gets tough
- Waits to be told what to do – Fails to take the initiative to resolve issues that may hamper performance
- Is prepared to cut corners to meet deadlines or lets deadlines slip in the pursuit of perfection – no evidence of getting the balance right
- Fails to consider the implication of decisions on quality/delivery and performance
- May over promise or under-deliver and fail to see the importance of delivery/honouring commitments to others
- Is focused on quantity rather than quality of output. Completes tasks to tick the box rather than to ensure that quality standards are adhered to
- No evidence of measuring/assessing the quality of outputs either via formal or informal measures

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Interview Plan & Timing

Interview Plan

Once you have carefully reviewed the competencies and decided which ones you want to focus on you can use this guide to generate a specific interview plan. Please carefully consider how much time you can spend with each candidate and adjust your interview accordingly. As a general guide it will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to ask (and probe) each of the competencies that you have selected.

Interview Indicative Timings

Introduction	5 minutes
Competency 1	10 - 15 minutes
Competency 2	10 - 15 minutes
Competency 3	10 - 15 minutes
Competency 4	10 - 15 minutes
Competency 5	10 - 15 minutes
Close and Candidate Questions	10 minutes

Review the example questions provided and select the two or three questions that you feel are most relevant. Once you have identified the questions that are most relevant, you may wish to tailor the wording to best suit the context or the language used in your organisation.

You may also feel that it is appropriate to include more technical questions. For example, you may require your candidates to demonstrate their ability to apply particular technical knowledge which will be crucial to their ability to perform successfully. Again, this is perfectly acceptable and would naturally sit under the competency Technical Capability, just be sure that you allow adequate time for this when planning and scheduling the interview.

Introducing a Competency Based Interview

- Welcome the candidate and offer them a drink

- Introduce yourself and explain your role in the whole assessment process

- Clarify how much time is available

- Introduce the idea of competency based interviewing - key points to cover include:

  - You will be focusing on specific areas (or competencies) that are critical for success in the role. Outline what the competencies are.

  - Within each area you will ask some standard questions designed to give evidence related to specific aspects/demands of the role. All candidates are asked the same questions to ensure that the process is fair. You will ask some supplementary/follow up probes based on the information they give.

  - When answering the questions they can draw on examples from their work experience, education, home life or social activities. Do ask that the candidates try and make the examples recent. When thinking of examples they should think of the acronym STAR (what was the **S**ituation? What **T**ask did they undertake? What **Action** did this require? What was the **R**esult?).

  - Explain it is not a test of their ability to come up with examples. If their mind goes blank or they need more time to think that is fine. If needs be you can move onto another question and go back to the one they are struggling with.

  - You will need to keep them focused and may cut their replies short at times when they are providing less relevant information or when you have gathered enough evidence for a particular competency. Explain there is no need for them to worry should you do this.

  - You will signpost each new competency area as you move to it so they understand the kind of evidence that you are looking for. In addition you will give them the opportunity to add any information that they feel is important before moving from one competency area to another. This does not mean that they have missed anything out!

- Explain that you will be taking notes and provide them with a pen and paper should they wish to do the same

- Add that there will be an opportunity for them to ask you questions at the end

- Check to see if the candidate has any questions about the process or the interview itself and deal with these before you launch into the interview questions

- Asking an open question about the interviewee's current work, educational or other daytime activities breaks the ice, warms the candidate up and gives some useful context for later questions.

  Typical examples include: *"Tell me about the main responsibilities in your current job"*

  Be prepared to ask the candidate to summarise if they start to give too much detail.

Using the Competency Based Interview Questions

Now you are in a position to work through the two or three questions that you have selected for each competency to be assessed. As you use the questions:

- Encourage the candidates to identify examples from past or present work experience, education and leisure. Gain as much tangible evidence as possible and focus on what they specifically did.

- Probe the answers provided using the suggested follow up questions listed in the interview guide (please note the list of suggested prompts is not exhaustive and the following page on question types will help you to formulate even more great questions as you need them).

- Try to gather both positive and negative information (i.e. encourage them to discuss both strengths and areas for development, the impact of any limitations and the actions that they have taken to overcome them).

- Listen and encourage the candidate to open up using your verbal and non-verbal behaviour. Try and capture as much of what the candidate says as possible in your interview notes as you will come back and evaluate these later. Avoid making remarks that imply some kind of judgement in the interview such as *"That was a good idea…", "How awful…", "Excellent"*

- Recap and summarise the evidence presented for each competency before you move onto the next area. This helps you to check your understanding of the points that the candidate has made. It also demonstrates that you have listened to the candidate and helps your memory for when you come to write up and rate the candidate against the competencies.

- Ensure that you address each competency area separately, and only gather evidence on one competency at a time wherever possible. If candidates start to stray into another competency area, make a quick note of what they are saying for when you get to that competency but steer them back on track.

  For example: *"That will be a useful example when we move onto talk about how you prioritise in a moment. Returning to the way you build networks…"*

- Ask if there is anything the candidate would like to add when you feel that you have explored a competency in sufficient detail before you move onto another area. After all of the competencies have been covered you should provide another opportunity for the candidate to add any further points. For example:

  "I feel that I have covered all of the areas that I wanted to ask you about. Is there anything else that you feel is relevant that you would like to add?"

- Following this, you should invite and answer any questions that the candidate has and thank them for their time and repeat information about next steps/timescales

- Once the candidate has left the room you should write up your interview notes as soon as possible. If you will not be writing up your assessment about the candidate straight away jot down any final points and observations while the evidence is fresh in your mind. You'll be amazed at how quickly you can forget significant details, particularly if you have interviewed a number of people in quick succession.

Posing Great Questions

You might find you need to ask extra/different follow up questions to those contained in this guide. The table below lists useful types of questions that will help you to collect relevant and comprehensive information.

Open Questions	*Who, What, When, Where, Why, How*
TED Questions	***T**ell me about a situation....* ***E**xplain a little more about...* ***D**escribe to me...*
Probing and Specific Questions	*What happened next? What were your specific responsibilities?*
Comparative Questions	*How does your current role compare with your previous position? How does your experience at college compare to school?* You can also ask them to compare their approach/behaviour with others: *How does your approach to customers compare with your peers? What makes you say that?*
Behavioural Questions	Explore their strengths, limitations, satisfactions and dissatisfactions, likes and dislikes: *What did you do best in planning that event? What skills do you bring to planning?* *On reflection, what could you have improved upon when planning that event?*
Feedback Questions	Ask them to report on feedback they have had from others, either in relation to a specific event, or more generally about that competency. For example: *What feedback did you get on how you approached that?* *How have your organisational skills been appraised in the past year?* You can also find out what they learned from the experience: *Now that you've had experience of planning an event, what if anything would you do differently next time?*

Assessing and Rating Candidates

Once the interview is completed it is advisable to evaluate the candidate's performance and assign a rating for each competency as soon as possible.

Step One: Review Your Interview Notes

Review your interview notes and decide which evidence supports which competency. On the whole the evidence should relate to the competency against which the question was asked but this may not always be the case. Try to ensure that all evidence is only assigned to one competency (to prevent double counting).

Use the behavioural positive and negative indicators on the Interview Rating Form to help assess the candidate's responses. These are by no means exhaustive but are tailored to represent the kind of evidence that is likely to be obtained by particular questions.

When reviewing your interview notes look for more than one piece of evidence for each competency and group this into themes and trends. Where conflicting evidence occurs try to reconcile this wherever possible.

Step Two: Rate the Candidate on Each Competency

A rating scale is a useful means of promoting accuracy and consistency in evaluation. Assessors should rate candidate behaviours in relation to each of the competencies using the rating scale below. In effect the rating summarises the extent to which a candidate has demonstrated the behaviours resulting in effective performance on a competency. As a candidate's performance more closely "fits" the competency, the higher the rating assigned.

Rating	Level	Description
5	Outstanding	Evidence of strength in this competency demonstrated consistently across all of the agreed behaviours
4	Good	Evidence of strength in this competency demonstrated across most of the agreed behaviours
3	Acceptable	Evidence of strength across some of the agreed behaviours with minor areas of less acceptable performance or inconsistency
2	Marginal	Evidence of less than acceptable performance across most of the agreed behaviours
1	Poor	Evidence of less than acceptable performance across all the agreed behaviours. No strengths demonstrated

Remember, remain objective. Decisions must be made on the basis of concrete evidence rather than on the opinions or assumptions of the interviewer. You should be prepared to admit when there is insufficient evidence upon which to decide about a particular competency and in such instance should assign the rating "Weak or Insufficient Evidence".

About great{with}talent

great{with}talent helps organisations increase levels of performance, employee engagement, and reduce staff turnover. We achieve this through a unique range of customisable services that focus specifically on engagement and retention. 'Person-organisation-fit' is central to our philosophy, and our approach focuses on understanding how individuals and organisations interact.
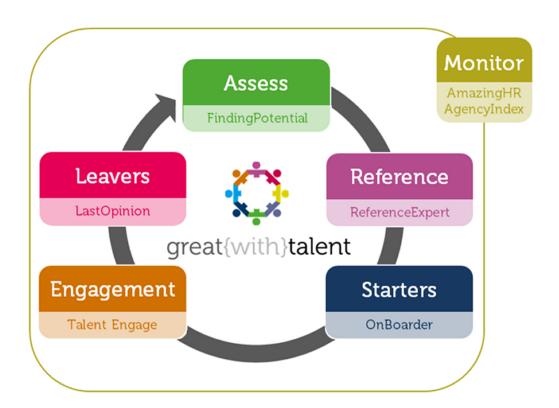
We've made it our mission to make our products as intuitive and user-friendly as possible. And inside each fantastic service we've included some brilliant and relevant technology. So when you use any of our services for the first time, we know it will save you money, help solve problems and create opportunity for your organisation.

Our roots are in business psychology and user-friendly web based applications. Our client base spans nearly 2000 high profile organisations, and we help them to save vast amounts of money by recruiting the right people, improving employee engagement, and ensuring their organisation is more efficient and effective.

We've proven expertise in designing and delivering questionnaires for every phase in the employee lifecycle. To date this equates to over 500,000 cases of employee data, collected globally in over 18 languages. This experience means we can create the right approach for you.

However, we're much more than an employee survey company. Our psychometric knowledge and research-based approach means we offer innovative approaches to collecting and analysing data. We then use our consultancy expertise to ensure our clients quickly understand and can take action on this data.

Our reports and analysis recognise the complexities of why people really stay or leave on an individual and group basis. This approach enables you to pinpoint exactly where and when dis-engagement occurs. And that's how great{with}talent will help your employees and your whole organisation to perform better.