

Interviewing Questions

Sample Candidate **The Holst Group**

This candidate has described himself as possessing certain behaviours. These questions will help you to assess how he has exhibited these behaviours in the past and whether he has consistently lived up to his full potential. For best possible results, elaborate with open-ended probes which solicit who, what, when, where, why and how responses.

In his answers, you should look for concrete, specific, positive examples of how he has exhibited the behaviours in question and, remember, since many candidates will initially respond with generalities, the deeper you probe, the better.

Most of your interview should centre around how he fits the behavioural requirements determined by the job. If he were to behave in this job the way he has behaved in the past, would this be a good fit?

Always be careful to avoid asking any questions relating to age, sex, marital status, cultural background, religion, etc., in your interview.

Dominant

He has described himself as being exceptionally competitive, goal orientated and ambitious.

(positive examples)

Has he consistently demonstrated a strong need to win and a healthy sense of competition? Has he set ambitious goals? Has he stepped up to take charge self-confidently? Has he taken calculated risks to achieve results? Has he worked effectively with people?

(negative examples)

Has he consistently put himself first? Has he had conflicts with his boss/co-workers? Has he demonstrated a win-at-all-costs attitude? Has he taken unnecessary, irresponsible chances? Has he alienated people by being too egocentric?

- Can you tell me about a time when you took a big risk to achieve a goal?
- What's the most challenging project you tackled last year?
- What do you consider the least personally rewarding aspect of your job?
- Tell me about the last time you had to work with a particularly difficult associate.

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Independent

He has described himself as being very independent and persistent.

(positive examples)

Has he displayed the ability to think for himself? Has he been able to influence others to accept his point of view? Has he made some very tough decisions? Has he shown initiative in his response to problems? Has he stood up to resistance?

(negative examples)

Has he been stubborn? Has he come across as opinionated and hard to work with? Has he bent the rules too many times? Has he had difficulty with follow-through? Has he had problems working towards a compromise solution?

- Did you ever have a really good idea only to have it shot down in flames initially? What did you do about it?
- Tell me about a time when you worked for someone who was too controlling. How did you handle it?
- Sometimes we can be too strong willed for our own good. Tell me about a time where you could have been more flexible.
- Paperwork sometimes seems to keep us from doing our jobs. Tell me about the last time you had to work hard to get out from under.

Analytical

He has described himself as being work orientated.

(positive examples)

Has he analysed problems in a rational and logical manner? Has he avoided distractions to focus on his work? Has he taken a diagnostic approach to decision-making? Has he brought a level of objectivity to emotional issues?

(negative examples)

Has he overlooked the people side of issues and had people problems? Has he sometimes come across as unenthusiastic and more critical than need be? Has he had trouble establishing good working relationships?

- Tell me about a time when you had to analyse the pros and cons of a problem before making a decision.
- Tell me about the last time you had to deal with an overly emotional colleague.

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Driving

He has described himself as being reasonably driving.

(positive examples)

Has he demonstrated a sense of urgency? Has he sought opportunities for change? Has he reacted well in emergencies? Has he responded to pressure and deadlines in a timely fashion? Has he multi-tasked effectively?

(negative examples)

Has he become bored easily, switching to something "more exciting"? Has he put too much pressure on? Has he left things to the last-minute, causing delivery problems? Has he over-estimated how many balls he can juggle?

- Can you give me an example from your recent past where you demonstrated a sense of urgency?
- What's the most routine job you ever had? How did you handle it?

Attention: While the above questions help you, through specific examples from his past history, to understand more fully how he has exhibited his temperament (behaviour pattern) as described by his McQuaig Word Survey®, other personal characteristics such as attitudes, self-motivation, stability, emotional maturity and intelligence must be probed thoroughly to understand his capabilities fully. The following are some suggested interviewing questions to use to probe all or a selection of these important areas.

Attitudes and Beliefs

(positive examples)

Has he maintained a positive, optimistic outlook? Is he self-confident and do his achievements support this confidence? Has he set high personal standards? Has he remained ethical in trying circumstances?

(negative examples)

Has he shown hesitation and doubt in his own abilities? Is he openly critical of previous employers and co-workers? Has he cut corners to get things done? Is he distrustful of others' motivations?

- Tell me about a recent assignment or project at work that demonstrated the standards you've set for yourself and your work.
- Tell me about a time when you had to stay positive to get a project completed, despite obstacles?

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Self Motivation

(positive examples)

Has he gone beyond what was expected? Has he attacked previous work assignments tenaciously? Has he been passionate about his work? Has he acted without waiting to be told what to do?

(negative examples)

Has he had difficulty sustaining a strong effort over time? Has he few examples of when he went beyond what was expected? Has he demonstrated little dedication in previous jobs? Has he defined his role narrowly?

- Tell me about a project that you felt passionate about.
- Tell me about a time when you were really excited by a project or assignment.

Stability and Persistence

(positive examples)

Does he have a history of consistent interests, goals and activities over time? Has he stood up to resistance? Has he kept his morale up and maintained effort despite obstacles? Has he viewed setbacks as learning opportunities?

(negative examples)

Has he had difficulty staying the course? Has he given up when the going got tough? Does he have a history of uncompleted projects? Has he taken the path of least resistance? Has he changed focus frequently?

- Would you tell me about a time when you really had to be tenacious to get the job done?
- Can you tell me about a time when you faced a number of setbacks in your job? How did you handle it?

Maturity and Judgement

(positive examples)

Has he employed a common sense approach? Has he accepted responsibility for both good and bad? Has he learned from his mistakes? Has he foregone short-term rewards for longer term benefits? Does he share credit?

(negative examples)

Has he acted with little forethought? Has he shown a lack of self discipline? Does he blame others? Has he made bad judgement calls? Does he rationalise? Does he refuse to admit it when he is wrong?

- Can you tell me about a time when you've had to make a sacrifice that had little reward in the short-term?
- Tell me about a time when you received criticism that you felt was unjust. What did you do?

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Aptitudes/Capacity to Learn

(positive examples)

Has he absorbed and adapted to new ideas and/or tasks readily? Does he have a proven ability to solve complex problems? Has he shown a commitment to on-going learning? Has he volunteered for new assignments?

(negative examples)

Has he had difficulty learning new skills or concepts? Has he shown limited progress and achievement? Does he do little professional or even outside reading? Has he had problems with technology?

- When you started your last job, what things came to you naturally and what areas did you really have to apply yourself to understand?
- Can you give me an example of a time you had difficulty grasping a new concept?