



○ Interviewing for Success

boyden



Collaborative

Astute



Enterprising

Worldly





Contents

Approaching the Interview

- 5 Introduction
- 6 Starting Off
- 8 Time Management
- 9 Closing

A Library of Interview Questions

- 10 Integrity
- 10 Problem Solving
- 13 Communication Skills
- 13 Motivation
- 15 Interpersonal Skills
- 16 Execution
- 17 Self-Analysis



○ Research shows that untrained job interviewers make up their minds on a candidate in less than a minute.



Candidate and interviewer...a unique interaction that has serious implications for the future of both parties. If you are the potential employee, your fit with the corporate culture and the honesty of your statements will be seen as vital to your future customers, co-workers, suppliers and stockholders.

Research shows that untrained job interviewers make up their minds on a candidate in less than a minute. They then spend the remainder of the interview confirming their prejudices. This guide is intended to prepare candidates for any kind of interview situation.

Boyden professionals interview over 15,000 executives on behalf of our clients every year. The interview and evaluation process is at the very core of our business, and the methods we've developed in over six decades of search work have been critical to our organization's continuing success.

The purpose of the interview is to evaluate the mutual fit between the candidate and the potential leadership role in the hiring organization. Effective interviewing is for the ultimate benefit of both parties.

Before a candidate is presented to one of our client companies, he or she has been thoroughly vetted and evaluated. This guide outlines a disciplined approach to help the most qualified candidates enter and conquer the interview process.

Approaching the Interview

Grooming and Presentation

If you are like most of our candidates, you have spent a far greater percentage of your time on the employer side of the table. Think about the candidate you'd prefer to greet: He or she will be well-groomed and presentable, dressed neatly and appropriately for the office environment. Boyden will advise you on the dress code well in advance.

Preparation is critical to a successful interview. In particular, you should have detailed knowledge of the content of the position for which you are being considered, the competencies required, and all existing information on the company. We will of course provide you with necessary information, but independent research is always recommended. You might want to think, in advance, about what aspects of yourself and your career you'd like to highlight. With a game plan for the interview, you'll feel prepared and show confidence and interest. Don't forget to bring extra copies of your CV or resume, and distribute them freely at the very outset of the session.

Starting Off

Mastering the Basics

One of the important keys to a successful interview is the establishment of rapport, as the interviewer might try to put you at ease and encourage you to "open up" and respond more spontaneously than you might otherwise in a rigid question/answer interview.

Typically, an interviewer will open up with a non-threatening "small talk" question aimed at easing initial tensions and requiring some elaboration. The subject matter might be how the candidate enjoyed living in a certain location or became interested in a particular pastime or community project. This ice-breaking stage should easily morph into the business portion of the interview, wherein you should continue to speak freely and comfortably.



Typically, an interviewer will open up with a non-threatening “small talk” question aimed at easing initial tensions and requiring some elaboration.

Be Relaxed

For many, this is easier said than done. Try to remember that you have important information that needs to be communicated in a clear and concise manner. As you take your time to answer, also take your time to listen. Ensure that communication has happened, and seek clarifications if needed. It is also important to make good eye contact with the interviewer during the meeting.

Time Management

The interviewer may ask both open-ended and closed-ended questions. You will also be expected to have questions of your own. The quality of your answers and insight of your questions are critical elements of your final evaluation, so we advise you to practice both your answers and questions. (Examples are provided in this guide.)

Open-ended questions: These are questions like “tell me about yourself.” To answer, be brief, about three or four minutes. Spend about half the time on the early days and the rest on the more recent and relevant years.

Closed-ended questions: These are questions like “tell me about a significant career achievement.” To answer, remember STAR. ST=describe the situation, A=action taken and R=results, punctuated with facts and figures. Be precise and clear in your communication.

Your questions: This is a golden opportunity for you to demonstrate your preparation and knowledge of the company and your interest in the role. Do your homework by reading the brief provided by Boyden, visiting the organization’s website, googling industry news, etc.

Ask questions first about the company, its growth, strategy, plans and any specific questions pertaining to the assignment. At this point it is appropriate to ask specific questions about the role, your growth prospects, etc.

Compensation

The initial meeting shouldn't be the time for salary negotiations. If asked, however, do provide your current compensation data. If asked about the expected package, reply tactfully that you will leave it to them to assess your fair value to the corporation.

Closing

Summary and Sale

As the interview comes to a close, summarize what makes you unique as a candidate for this role, taking into account the information you have gleaned from the interview. Inquire about next steps. Most importantly, thank them for the opportunity to meet.

In the end, it is the person-to-person connection that sells a candidate. So if you feel it is warranted and you are truly sincere, tell the interviewer you are excited about the meeting and the prospect of joining their organization. Send an email of thanks later, including any materials you may have promised to send (articles, tables of data, etc.). And of course, don't forget to call your Boyden consultant to debrief him or her afterward.

A Library of Interview Questions

In every search conducted by Boyden, we evaluate candidates on six key leadership characteristics:

- > Integrity
- > Problem Solving
- > Communication Skills
- > Motivation
- > Interpersonal Skills
- > Execution

Below are potential interview questions related to each.

1: Integrity

- In your present role, how have you balanced the needs of customers, shareholders, management, employees and others? Please give examples of conflicts, trade-offs and how you handled them.
- What are your views on governance and the role of the Board of Directors? What governance issues have you personally encountered? How have you dealt with them?
- How have you handled cases of dishonesty in your business career?
- How would you react to an accusation of dishonest dealings against your company and/or against yourself?
- How do you evaluate and manage the advice of lawyers, accountants, bankers and other professional advisors?
- How do you feel about diversity and minority issues?
- How do you balance your personal and business life?
- Is there anything you feel we should know which might raise questions about your integrity regarding this role?

2: Problem Solving

- In your present position, what problems have you identified that had previously been overlooked?

- How have you changed the nature of your job?
- What are three basic managerial criteria you use in judging a colleague?
- Have you helped reduce costs? How?
- Have you helped increase sales? Profits? How?
- Describe typical problems you are likely to face during the day and ways in which you reach solutions.
- What was your most serious problem in the last year?
- What was your worst mistake in recent years?
- Describe changes you have recommended.
- Describe situations where your judgment proved valuable.
- How do you measure a subordinate's judgment?
- Who has sought your opinion in the last month and what was the nature of the inquiry?
- Why did you take your company into "X" market?
- What are some difficult decisions you have made?
- How would you evaluate your present firm?
- When you are making a decision, how do you go about acquiring the right information?
- In what situation has your work been criticized?
- Would your colleagues rate you as the person with whom to discuss their problems?
- Describe several successes you have had in problem solving for your company.
- What was the most difficult problem you have faced?
- How do you go about solving a business problem?
- What human relations problems have you faced?



○ What makes you effective in person-to-person or small group situations?

3: Communication Skills

- How do you generally function in group discussions?
- Have you ever led a workshop or seminar?
- What makes you effective in person-to-person or small group situations?
- What accomplishments can you tell me about to show you are a good communicator?
- Do you prefer to communicate by phone, email or face-to-face?
- How do you communicate with individuals who work for you? With others within your organization?
- How do you rate yourself as a presenter?
- Describe your “platform” skills.
- How do you go about selling your ideas?
- How would you improve your communication skills?
- Do you volunteer to speak at gatherings?
- Describe some of your presentations.
- From whom have you sought advice in the last five years? Last month? Last week?
- When you are in a discussion, do you consider yourself a good listener? Why?
- For whom are you a mentor?

4: Motivation

- Where are you now in your career and where will you be in three years?
- What are your short- and long-term objectives?
- What do you look for in a job?
- Give me the reasons for your last three job changes.
- What new goals or objectives have you established recently?

- What is the best aspect of your current position? The worst?
- Given the advantages you started with, how far have you really advanced?
- What interests you most about the position we are discussing? The least?
- What factors would lead you to leave your present position?
- What aspects of your previous positions have you liked/disliked?
- Do you prefer staff or line work? Why?
- What kinds of events make you emotional?
- How do you react when your boss, clients or stockholders put pressure on you?
- What are the aggravations of your present position?
- Do you enjoy hectic activity?
- What would your colleagues say about your drive?
- What failing situation have you rescued?
- How do you get things done?
- How did you find your first job?
- How would you react to heading a start-up situation?
- In describing your leadership style, what is more important — form or content?
- Have you ever left a position because the standards set were not high enough?
- In your expectations for others, how close do your colleagues come to meeting the mark?
- Describe situations in which you have had to “bend” to achieve objectives.
- Which is more important — completing a job on time or doing it right?

- What are your outside interests — social, community, arts, sports?
- What does success mean to you?
- What is most important in your life?
- Who is a well-known figure (dead or alive) that you admire? Why?
- Did you have a mentor and, if so, how did that individual affect your career?
- What is the legacy you will leave in your current job?
- What might it be in this new role?

5: Interpersonal Skills

- In what situations do you mandate and when do you consult?
- Describe your management style.
- How do you motivate people?
- What makes a good leader in business?
- Describe several examples of your leadership skills.
- Describe an ideal boss.
- Describe an ideal subordinate.
- What perceptions do colleagues have of you?
- How have you improved subordinates' performance?
- What do you think of your boss?
- What do you look for in hiring people?
- How would you go about firing people?
- To what degree have you developed subordinates who have been promoted to other executive positions?
- What techniques have you used to build team spirit?

- How have you supported the weaker members of your group?
- Do you generally speak to people before they speak to you?
- Have you been a spokesperson for your company?
- Are you asked to take on special assignments?
- Describe special projects or task forces for which you were selected.
- How would you describe your impact on your company?

6: Execution

- What results have you delivered in previous and present jobs?
- What do you see as obstacles to results in this new role?
- How would you overcome them?
- How do you allocate your time during a typical day?
- How do you set priorities?
- How do you assign tasks? What controls do you use?
- What types of tasks do you feel you cannot delegate?
- Do you have a succession plan?
- How have you contributed to change in your organization?
- How do you determine if a subordinate is effective?
- Have you used MBO? What were the results?
- Describe how you plan to organize delivery of results.
- Have you had many “crises” in your job? Why?
- Are you better at planning or implementation?
- How do you administer the subjective part of your incentive program?

Self-Analysis

- How would your boss rate you in the following areas and why? How would you rate yourself?
 - > Integrity
 - > Problem Solving
 - > Communication Skills
 - > Motivation
 - > Interpersonal Skills
 - > Execution
- What might your closest personal friend say they dislike about you?
- What would your direct reports say about you?
- What is your greatest strength? Weakness?
- Why should we hire you?
- What can you do for us that another candidate could not do?
- How would you describe your personality?
- Why didn't you do better in college, or in your job?
- If you could start your career again, what would you do differently?
- What are your five biggest accomplishments in your present job?
- How do you know when you've done a good job?
- Why aren't you earning more?
- Why do you feel you have top management potential?
- What are the weak spots in your work habits?
- Tell me what you consider your greatest abilities and how they will help you in this job.
- Don't you feel you might be better off in a different company or career?
- Are you creative? Give several examples.

Interviewing is an art form... as is being interviewed.

Your interviewer will be prepared, and so should you. Boyden professionals have been perfecting interview training, for all parties, for over 70 years. The techniques shared in this guide are crucial when striving to differentiate yourself in a crowded pool of qualified job applicants.

If you would like to learn more about Boyden, visit us at www.boyden.com to locate the office nearest you.

Boyden has over 65 offices in more than 40 countries, serving clients all across the globe.



Interviewing is an art form that Boyden professionals have been perfecting for over 70 years.



The Right Leadership. **Worldwise.**

A member of the
Association of Executive Search Consultants

www.boyden.com

boyden