

# Talent-based interviewing: The 5 best questions

by Jay Forte



Standard or traditional interview questions no longer provide meaningful information about a candidate. These interviews use predictable, general questions that do not assess how a candidate will think on his feet in your workplace.

In the course of a day, we make about 20,000 three-second decisions. The majority of our decisions are responsive.

We follow our natural or DNA-inspired brain connections. So if our top-of-mind reactions match those needed in the job, then we typically make good decisions at work. If not, we constantly seem to make the wrong decisions.

Enter talent-based interviewing. This form of interviewing asks questions about real-life situations that are phrased in a unique way to elicit a candidate's first (natural) response. This is a better assessment of future performance than simply checking whether the candidate has previously worked in a similar role (experience).

Here are five talent-based interview question formats. What makes them effective is that they require on-the-spot thinking and responses to real-life events. This basically tests out how a candidate thinks and solves before he is hired.

**1. Tell me about a time when you ... (then fill in a situation that will happen in the workplace).**

*Example:* Tell me about a time when you were confronted with what you felt to be an overly aggressive sales target. What did you do? What was the outcome?

**2. Here is a situation you'll have to deal with as part of this job ...(provide a situation). How would you handle it?** *Example:* In our workplace we have lines of customers waiting at the front door when we open. How would you handle this so that every customer still feels important and valued?

**3. If I were to ask your previous boss about how you handle ... (provide a situation) what would he say?** *Example:* If I were to ask your previous boss about how you promote an idea or change in the workplace, what would he say? Why? Share the situation.

**4. What in your previous work experience would help you determine how to handle ... (provide a situation)?** *Example:* What in your previous work experience will help you successfully deal with an irate customer face-to-face? Share your experiences.

**5. Here are your choices ... (provide 2 choices). Which would you choose and why?** *Example:* Here are your choices: You can short ship a customer's order and send it out on time, or you can be late on the order and ship it complete. Which would you choose and why?

What matters most in talent-based interviewing is that you:

- Create unique and unusual questions that a candidate cannot prepare for to elicit his or her top-of-mind reaction, not pre-rehearsed responses.
- Use real workplace events, situations or responsibilities to assess how the candidate will handle your actual world.

Combine these two and you'll have powerful and meaningful interview questions, designed to help you assess how the candidate will add value and make a difference in your workplace.

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