



# Randstad's guide to effective interviewing

*Job fit, boss fit, company fit*



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Choices, so many choices. All of a sudden you are faced with dozens, even hundreds of people who may be qualified to work for your organization. But having so many choices doesn't make recruiting easier. The challenge is to find the right person, the best person for the job. Exceptional people make a substantial difference in organizations with fewer people on the payroll. You need to find the person you want, and the person who wants you — the right fit.

How do you decide if an applicant is qualified or over qualified? How do you determine if they will accept and align with your goals and objectives for the long term? How will you decide if they are exceptional or just acceptable?

You ask, listen and learn. The interview is the most important step in the hiring process and how you filter and analyze candidates is more critical than ever. Randstad literally interviews thousands of people each week. We are the experts in asking the right questions and using the proper techniques. We want to share our expertise with you. The key to successful interviews is asking questions that generate insight as well as information. Far more than, "What do you know and what have you done?", we will help you uncover attitudes, motivations, strengths, weaknesses and ambitions. The goal is the right fit, for the job, the boss and the company.

Our success in finding the right candidate is founded in our "*Job fit, boss fit, company fit*" philosophy. This unique, three-tiered approach has served us well across the United States and in the 53 countries we serve throughout Europe, Asia, and North America. The idea is elegant in its simplicity – find the person with the right combination of attributes, ideals and experience that go beyond the job description. Find the person who "fits".





## Job fit, boss fit, company fit

- Candidates should possess the right skill sets and experience to do the job, in addition to a genuine interest to perform required tasks. At Randstad, we call this *job fit*.
- The individual should be a good match for their direct supervisor in terms of personality traits, values, and expectations. We refer to this as *boss fit*.
- Candidates should be interested in and motivated by a style of work environment similar to that offered by your company, and they should demonstrate the ability to work well with the other members of a team. This important element is known as *company fit*.





## Job fit questions

To make the right hiring decisions, you should look for candidates who not only have the right skill sets and experience to do the job, but also hold a legitimate interest in performing the tasks involved. During the interview, take the time to ask about the candidate's specific strengths and weaknesses as well as their likes and dislikes. The following questions will help you delve a little deeper into these areas.

**In your current/previous position(s), what were your main responsibilities?**

What duties did you enjoy most?

What did you like most about these duties?

What duties did you enjoy the least?

What did you dislike about these duties?

**Describe a difficult problem you had to solve in your last or current position.**

How did you go about resolving it?

**Give me an example of a mistake you have made at work.**

What caused you to make that error and how did you rectify it?

**What aspects of your previous job did you find stressful?**

How did that stress affect you or your performance?

**In your most recent performance appraisal:**

What did your supervisor feel were your greatest strengths?

What developmental areas did he/she identify?

Do you agree with their assessment?

**Based on your previous work experience:**

What do you think would be the most interesting or enjoyable aspect of the position? Why?

What do you think would be the most difficult or challenging aspect of the position? Why?

**In your current job search, what other positions have you applied for or considered?**

What was appealing about these positions?

What types of positions for which you are qualified, have you avoided?

What is it about these positions that you find unappealing?

### Interpreting the answers

The best way to predict future performance is through past performance. You are ideally looking for a candidate who has demonstrated their competence and sustained interest in positions similar to yours in the past. If the candidate is inexperienced, traits such as conscientiousness, interest, and ability to learn new things will give you a good idea of what to expect. Remember to consider both ability (technical skills and experience) and willingness (preferences and criteria). Many people are technically competent at jobs, then quit due to lack of interest.





## Boss fit questions

It is a well-accepted fact that the chemistry or fit between manager and employee is an excellent predictor of the ultimate success and sustainability of the employment relationship. For this reason, it is important to explore what a potential employee is looking for in a boss and the factors that have contributed to the success and/or failure of their previous manager-employee relationships.

**Describe the best supervisor you ever had.**

What did you appreciate the most about this person?

**Tell me about the supervisor who was the most effective in motivating you.**

What, specifically, did they do?

**Describe the supervisor for whom you least enjoyed working.**

What specifically did you dislike about their approach?

What impact did this supervisor have on your performance?

**Give me an example of a time when your boss did something that demotivated you.**

What was the situation and how did you react?

**In your previous jobs, have you ever reported to more than one person at a time?**

Did this reporting structure work for you? Why or why not?

**Give an example of a time when you received critical feedback from your supervisor.**

How did they approach giving you the feedback? What was your reaction?

**Tell me about a criticism you received from a supervisor that you felt was not justified.**

How did you react?

**In your most recent position, how much direction did you get from your immediate supervisor?**

Do you feel that this level of supervision was sufficient, excessive, or not enough?

**Describe a time when your supervisor gave you a task to complete or instructions that were unclear.**

What did you do?

### Interpreting the answers

A great match between a manager and an employee begins with shared values and mutual understanding. Take a few minutes to candidly assess your style as a manager, and compare it to the anecdotes of past great, and not-so-great, boss-employee relationships shared with you by the candidate. Will you be effective at motivating this employee? Will you be able to deliver feedback or criticism in a manner acceptable to this person? Will the level of supervision you provide be in keeping with what they need and want? In the area of boss fit, compromise can be costly and stressful for everyone concerned. When you get it right, the results speak for themselves.





## Company fit questions

An essential part of recruiting is hiring employees who will be motivated by their work environment, work well with other members of the team, and who will embrace, or at the very least, respect the values of the company. Employees are most productive in an environment where their principles, priorities, and objectives fit. Here are some questions to help you assess whether a prospective employee will be an asset or a liability to your organization.

**What do you know about our company?**

**What interests you about our company?**

What aspects of working here would you find the most appealing?

**Of the companies you've worked for thus far in your career, which one did you most enjoy working for and why?**

**Which employer least impressed you?**

What could they have done to become a better employer?

**When you think of the different departments or teams in which you have worked:**

Where did you experience the best teamwork?

What made that team successful?

Where did you experience the least effective teamwork?

What reduced this team's effectiveness?

**Provide an example of someone you found difficult to work with. Why?**

**Describe a time when you had difficulty accomplishing a task that had been assigned to you because of an obstacle you encountered within your department or company.**

What did you do?

**Describe a time in your previous job where you were asked to do something with which you did not agree.**

What did you do?

**Describe the different workspace arrangements you've experienced (open space, cubicle, private office...).**

Which one worked best for you? Why?

### Interpreting the answers

In general, employees who are able to function well in teams and organizations will have had mostly positive experiences with past employers. Listen closely to the candidate's description of the teams within which they have worked. Most effective team players will use "we" more than "I" when describing team projects and accomplishments and will demonstrate a measure of understanding and ownership for team objectives. Conflicts or disagreements between colleagues are bound to occur, and the ability to resolve these situations constructively is a valuable skill for your employees to have. Again, the manner in which these situations were handled in the past will speak volumes.





## Tips for interviewers

To help make your next hiring decision as objective and well informed as possible, we have listed some pointers to keep in mind when interviewing potential candidates. Remember, talking is only one-third of the process. You want to communicate clearly, make sure the applicant understands what you want, and then become an active listener.

***Be honest and objective.*** Be sure to give the candidate a full and accurate description of the position, the boss, and the work environment. Explain both the high points and the low points and observe the reaction.

***Be interested, not interesting.*** Encourage them to talk and then follow. Whenever possible ask candidates to explain, elaborate, or give examples of past experiences that illustrate their perspective or point of view. This will prevent you from drawing incorrect conclusions.

***Don't expect consistency.*** No interviews or answers will be the same. Try not to have a "right answer" in mind. Be open to surprises and different points of view. Be patient and avoid making decisions about candidates in the first few minutes of an interview. First impressions tend to be based on incomplete information and false perceptions.

***Horns and halos.*** All candidates will have both strengths and weaknesses in relationship to the job description. Be objective and realistic. Try not to like or dislike the candidate based on a single factor or attribute.

***Remember their expectations.*** Take the time to uncover their expectations and ensure that your future employee is really sold on your company rather than just taking a job. If you are strongly interested in a candidate, take the time to answer their questions and introduce them to their future colleagues.

***Allow them to be different.*** The best teams are composed of people with diverse skills, experiences, and backgrounds. Avoid favoring those most like yourself.

*continued >*





There are no perfect interviews. Sometimes a candidate will stumble, get confused or not answer the questions the way you thought they would. It is easy to confuse a confident candidate with a thoughtful one. You may need to give them more time, rephrase a question or come back to a topic later to gather more information and insight. Remember, interviews can be a little intimidating and candidates aren't always as candid as they could be. Who can blame them, they want the job! Here are some ways to help the candidate feel more comfortable and/or answer more fully.

**Take your time.** Wait for about 15 seconds before reacting in any way. This pause may give the applicant the extra time he or she needs to think of a response to your question. Take your time; this is the candidate's interview.

**The "You're okay" statement.** If the applicant starts looking uncomfortable, put him or her at ease with a statement assuring that it is okay to take time to respond. Use supportive nonverbal, as well as verbal, messages like a smile or a nod of your head. "I realize it is sometimes difficult to remember these past experiences. That's okay; most people need time to think."

**Put it a different way.** If the applicant is unable to respond right away (or at all) to your question, restate the question using different words. Restating the question may give the applicant a better understanding of what you are asking and trigger his or her memory.

**Sympathetic persistence.** This response shows that you understand that thinking of the answer is not always easy, but you are really interested in a specific example, "I realize it is a bit tough to come up with examples, but could you think of a recent time you used those skills?"

**Assume responsibility.** When it becomes apparent that the answer is not forthcoming, the interviewer can communicate that the response given is not what is needed. Instead of putting the person on the defensive assume the responsibility for the error. "I am sorry, my question prompted you to tell me how you generally prioritize your day, and it sounds like you do a great job. Can you give me a specific example of when you had more than one high-priority project and how you completed them within the required time frame?"

**Signal success.** When the candidate has answered a question to your satisfaction, let him or her know. Positive reinforcement encourages better answers and can actually make the difference between a good interview and a poor one.

All of these tips will be helpful in conducting a better interview, which will lead to a better hire – and more specifically to a better *"Job, boss and company fit."*





## Randstad at a glance

### Randstad US

Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, Randstad is a leading employment services provider with more than 600 branches and client-dedicated locations in the United States. Randstad US's 3,300 employment experts put an average of 50,000 people to work each week.

### Global Presence

Randstad US is a wholly owned subsidiary of Netherlands-based Randstad Holding nv, a \$24 billion global provider of professional employment services. Randstad Holding nv is the second largest staffing organization in the world, with 5,400 offices in 53 countries around the globe.

### Flexible Service Options

Permanent placement  
Temporary-to-hire placement  
Temporary placement

### Areas of Expertise

- Office
- Executive Office
- Industrial
- Call Center
- Finance & Accounting
- Technical & Engineering
- Creative
- Healthcare
- IT
- Education
- Legal
- Other HR services, such as payrolling

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