



StEPs-UT Management Managing People, Places & Things

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY #1 = 15 minutes

BEST Approach to Job Descriptions and Job Selection

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) On your own, think about your job description at your museum. When hiring someone for your position, what would a hiring committee need to look for in a good candidate? Using the definition of BEST characteristics below, how could your job description be broken down into:
 - **Behavior** – Performance, Actions, and Conduct
 - How a person acts or reacts to specific circumstances
 - Demonstrated through performance, actions and conducts
 - Often dictated by traits
 - **Education** – What Do People Know?
 - The information and knowledge a person carries
 - A primary reason people are hired, but ultimate plays a relatively small role in their success or failure (assuming their education is adequate for the job)
 - **Skills** – What Can a Person Do? What are Their Abilities?
 - What a person can do
 - A person’s ability to function in a job and perform the assigned duties
 - Can be more easily taught than a behavior or a trait
 - **Traits** - Characteristics that define someone’s personal nature
- 2) Use this worksheet to list the attributes required for your job under the most appropriate category – is it a **Behavior**, **Education**, a **Skill**, or a **Trait** (10 minutes)?
- 3) Group discussion and sharing (5 minutes).

BEHAVIORS

EDUCATION

SKILLS

TRAITS

BEST Approach | Matching the Right Person to the Right Job Questions for Determining Behaviors & Traits

SOURCE: Bob Kelleher, *Employee Engagement for Dummies*, 2014, pp 228-233

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- **Traits** – Characteristics that define personal nature.

The idea is to craft questions that are targeted toward specific behaviors and traits that are unique to your organization and position. Although traits such as enthusiasm, patience, selflessness, and optimism may be desired in any workplace, there will be differences in positions’ requirements that require tailored inquiry. This table lists questions to suss out an individual’s important qualities and can be used as a starting point.

TO DETERMINE	ASK
Ability to learn	What kinds of things do you learn quickly? What kinds of things do you have a harder time picking up?
Adaptability, flexibility	Tell me about a situation in which you had to adjust quickly to changes over which you had no control. What was the impact of the change?
Analytic abilities, honesty	What do you know about our organization and its services?
Character, values, commitment, goals	How would your close work associates describe you? What traits are you most proud of? What trait best suits you for this job?
Customer focus	Relay an experience that demonstrates your commitment to customers?
Coaching, leadership	Tell me about a time when you took someone under your wing and what you tried to teach him or her.
Communication, accountability	Tell me about a time when your active listening skills really paid off for you – maybe a time when other people missed the key idea being expressed.
Communication, feedback	Tell me about a time when you had to be critical of someone else.
Communication, influence	Describe the most successful experience you’ve ever had in persuading someone to do something.
Communication, relationships	Give an example of a situation when you were able to communicate successfully with a person who didn’t like you.
Communication, self-expression, listening skills, tact	Are you more skilled at written or verbal communication? Why?
Communication (written), innovation	What is the most challenging report you’ve ever written? What made it unique? To what audience was it written?
Customer service, analytic abilities, empathy, efficiency	What is your process for handling customer complaints?
Decision-making, analytic abilities	Tell me about the most difficult customer service experience you’ve ever had to handle – perhaps an irate customer. What did you do? Outcome?

TO DETERMINE	ASK
Decision-making, integrity, realism, common sense	Everyone has to bend or break the rules once in a while. Can you give me an example of how you handled this kind of situation?
Decision-making, problem-solving, creativity	Give an example of a problem, issue, or concern that you handled in a unique, creative way.
Decision-making, realism, willingness to learn, accountability, confidence	Tell me about a time when you made the wrong decision. What went wrong? What would you do differently knowing what you know now?
Efficiency, analytic abilities	How do you prioritize your work?
Energy, drive, initiative	What are some examples of your going beyond your job requirements? What are you currently doing to improve your overall performance?
Enthusiasm	What achievement are you most proud of?
Frugality	Describe a time in which you saved money for your organization or customer.
General	What special characteristics should I consider about you as a person?
General	Give me a quick overview of your current or prior position and describe the biggest impact or change you made.
General, analytic abilities, creativity	Describe your ideal job.
General, analytic abilities, detail oriented	Walk me through a typical day in your work life. What is your favorite part? What is your least favorite part?
General, confidence	What has been your greatest accomplishment? Why?
General, confidence, accountability	What did you do in your last job to contribute to a positive work environment?
General, confidence, risk-taking, willingness to learn	What has been your greatest challenge? Why? How did you handle it? What did you learn from it?
General, initiative	Give me an example of how you did more than required in your job.
Innovation, creativity	What approaches could you take to the following problem? (Then describe a common problem.)
Management style, philosophy	Describe your management style. How would direct reports describe your philosophy? What is most important to overall organizational success?
Personality, cultural fit	Who was the best manager you ever had? Describe that person's traits. In which of your past work environments were you happiest? Why?
Planning, organization	Describe how you go about planning and organizing your work and setting priorities. When can planning get in the way of results?
Planning, organization, analytic abilities, delegation, realism	If you left your organization today, what would be left undone?
Planning, organization, confidence	What did you do in your last job to be effective at accountability, planning, and organizing?
Problem identification, analytic abilities, problem solving, relationships, integrity	If you observed someone displaying inappropriate work behavior, what would you do?
Problem solving, analytic abilities	If you were to get this job, how would you go about solving this typical problem? (Then describe a common problem.)
Problem solving, collaboration	Give an example of a problem you faced on the job and tell me how you solved it.

TO DETERMINE	ASK
Problem solving, thinking skills	From a technical challenge standpoint, what past experience was most stimulating? What kinds of problems do you enjoy tackling?
Professional development, analytic abilities, initiative	Is there some technique or technology you want to learn but haven't yet? Describe it.
Professional development, confidence, accountability	In your last performance review, what was detailed in the "employee strengths" section?
Professional development, willingness to learn	How many training opportunities have you taken advantage of in the last three years? What were they and what did you learn? What have you implemented as a result?
Professional development, willingness to learn	In your last performance review, what was detailed in the "developmental needs" section?
Relationships	Describe how you've collaborated with people outside your department or organization in the past. What cross-sectional teams have you participated in during your career and what role did you play on those teams?
Relationships, communication, collaboration	Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you handle that person?
Results oriented, confidence, realism	Give me an example of a goal you didn't accomplish. What went wrong?
Results oriented, innovation, initiative	Tell me about the goals you set for yourself last year and whether you achieved those goals.
Results oriented, innovation, planning	Tell me about your goals for this coming year and your plans to achieve them.
Results oriented, confidence, self-respect, enthusiasm	Tell me about a project you're particularly proud of having been associated with and why.
Risk taking, accountability	Describe a time when you weighed the pros and cons of a risk and why you decided to take it.
Stress management, willingness to learn, innovation	Relate a situation in which you were under significant pressure. How did you handle it?
Team leadership, ability to persuade or motivate others	What do you see as being the advantages and disadvantages of working as part of a team? What are the challenges of leading a team?
Teamwork, collaboration, facilitation	Describe your most recent group effort.
Technical abilities, confidence	This position requires a variety of skills. Describe your strengths that are applicable to the position.
Trend of performance over time	How has your job or level of contribution changed since you began working in this field? How would your current manager describe your performance?

As you develop questions that illuminate behaviors and traits, keep your questions open-ended. Descriptive responses will always include specific information and may reveal things you never thought to ask.

Avoid leading questions that indicate to the applicant what you want to hear.

Avoid questions that are legally off-limits (age, sex, marital status, parental status, health status, race, height or weight, religion, etc).