
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Guiding Thoughts and Principles:

- Principle of Indirect Inquiry: Often the best results in interviewing are obtained when you ask a question without using the specific term you are asking about.
 - For example: Instead of asking about their leadership capacity, ask them instead about a time when the candidate was in a situation that required change or turnaround.
- Constructionist Principle: Our organizations and knowledge move in the direction of our conversations ... what are we most often asking about?
- Principle of Simultaneity: Questions are fateful. Change begins with the first question you ask.
- Knowledge Principle: Questions lead not only shared knowledge, but have the potential for knowledge generation.

Interview Questions for Assessing Leadership Capacity:

- Share one your successes? What did you do? How did you go about it? What were the results?
- Tell me about a time when you experienced a major failure?
 - How did you overcome it?
- Can you tell us a story of a time when you had to build a team?
 - How did you go about it? What obstacles did you surmount? What was the outcome?
- From your perspective, what is the relationship between listening and leadership?
 - When you go into a new organization, what process do you use to “discern” the vision?
- Some leadership experts have suggested that the role of the individual or “heroic” leader is becoming obsolete and that a team leadership approach can be more effective. Where do you land in this discussion? Which approach have you found to be most effective in reaching your individual and organizational goals?
- When you go into a new organization, how do you “read” the culture? (How do you determine) If the organizational culture needs to be reinvented/changed, (and) how would you go about it?

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- How do you determine what to focus on in the first 90 days? What have been the best results from previous “first 90 day” experiences? What “first 90 day” decision would you like to do over?
 - Since you know some of the background and challenges of this organization, what would you anticipate the focus of your first 90 days to be?
 - How would you develop relationships, both internally and externally? Can you give us an example of a relationship that you grew from “seedling” to maturity, or from foe to friend?
 - How do you grow your direct reports, both professionally and personally?
 - When you leave an organization, how do you determine if your leadership has been effective?
 - Who do you most admire and why?
 - Have you had any (or many) mentors in your career and how have they influenced you?
 - How would describe culture?
 - How would you describe the culture of the last three organizations you worked in (or last two depending how many different organizations)?
 - Describe your leadership and management style within each?

What suggestions or additions would you add to the principles and questions above? We would love to hear your thoughts.