



# DNA Hiring Performance Powerful Questions Guide

Behavioral Interviewing to Transform Hiring Performance



DNA Behavior<sup>®</sup>

# Introduction

## Why a Guide for Hiring Questions?

Welcome to the DNA Hiring Performance Powerful Hiring Questions Guide.

In my experience, many candidates can write a good resume and then perform well in an interview. However, why do they then not sustain that performance when in the role? For the employer this can cost many multiples of the person's salary, and then you have to start again.

Based on a lot of research and experience, the core of the issue is that many employer's hire for skills and knowledge and do not identify the candidate's true talents. That is those natural behaviors which continually and predictably repeat themselves over time and are often not easily seen in an interview. Very often many of the natural behaviors are hidden below the surface. Further, the employer's own biases, perceptions, blind-spots and other random factors, collectively known as Behavioral Variability, can then mean the candidate's talents are obscured even more. Many candidates will have "learned" to operate a certain way but that is not in line with who they naturally are. Therefore, over time, and with pressure the natural behavior emerges, and the candidate is not driven the way that was hoped.

The hiring goal is to identify the candidate's natural behaviors along with their identity, purpose, values and passions and then match them to the right role which is defined by talents. If you follow this formula, it is more likely the candidate will perform well over the long-term with less stress.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you follow the process outlined in this guide. In particular, that you have each candidate complete the DNA Natural Behavior Discovery Process. The power of this guide will then be to help you use the very insightful behavioral information that is uncovered by the discovery process to ask "Powerful Hiring Questions" in the interviews. Specific questions have been provided in this book to address the key behavioral themes of each natural DNA behavior profile factor and sub-factor.

Whilst it is not compulsory to use the DNA Natural Behavior Discovery Process for hiring, I encourage employers and recruiters to participate in our training programs and use our recorded videos. These resources will help you better learn how to interpret the Business DNA reports and improve your hiring capabilities. To receive more information about our hiring resources and consulting services please contact us at [inquiries@businessdna.com](mailto:inquiries@businessdna.com)

I sincerely hope that this book is helpful in making the DNA Hiring Performance experience more practical, and that it will be a significant step towards more reliably hiring top performing talent for your team. Good luck!

- Hugh Massie, June 2008

# The DNA Hiring Performance Process

1. This Book is to be used with the DNA Hiring Performance Process.
2. Specifically, this book will set out for you:
  - The Powerful Hiring Questions YOU as the employer may ask in an interview (“Employer Interview Questions”).
  - The Powerful Candidate Questions a CANDIDATE may ask you as a prospective employer during the interview process (“Candidate Interview Questions”).

# ***Section 1:***

# ***Employer Interview Questions***

# Objectives of Powerful Hiring Questions

1. Identify high performance candidates
2. Match talents to roles
3. Get through the superficial “party manners” in the interview to the performance issues
4. Identify areas where the candidate is covering up the real facts or information
5. Build respect by demonstrating you take hiring seriously but have the candidate’s best interests in mind

# Interviewing With Powerful Hiring Questions

Step 1

Telephone Interview Screening Questions

Step 2

DNA Natural Behavior Discovery  
Completion and Insights Interpretation

Step 3

First Interview Agenda

Step 4

Second Interview Questions

Step 5

Reference Screening Questions

# ***Step 1:***

# ***Telephone Interview Screening Questions***

# Telephone Interview Screening Questions

1. What is your understanding of what our business is about?
2. Have you reviewed our website?
3. What was it about the job description that was appealing to you?
4. Do you understand what will be involved in this job?
5. What is your motivation for leaving your current job/employment?
6. How did you get into your current job? What led you there?
7. Why do you think this opportunity will better meet your needs?
8. Why do you think you have the talents and skills to do the job?
9. What type of working environment are you looking for?
10. Other questions that may relate to the uniqueness of the business or situation

***Step 2:***  
***DNA Natural***  
***Behavior***  
***Discovery***  
***Completion and***  
***Interpretation***

# Natural Talents Profile Interpretation & Interview Steps

**Step 1**

**Interpret Natural DNA Behavior Insights**

**Step 2**

**Identify the candidate's strongest traits with scores over 60 and 40**

**Step 3**

**Review the Workplace Behavioral Attitudes and Insights to connect the profile to the candidate's workplace behaviors and team fit**

**Step 4**

**Identify where the candidate's strengths and struggles align with the role**

**Step 5**

**Design the First Interview Agenda with Powerful Hiring Questions based on the candidate's strongest profile factors**

# DNA Natural Behavior Discovery

- **The DNA Natural Behavior Discovery** measures normal “hard-wired” behavioral traits only
- The profiles do not identify baggage or mental health
- The profile outcomes remain stable over time
- No ‘good’ or ‘bad’ profiles and not used to ‘box’ people
- No decision should be made solely on profiles
- The profiles are gender neutral
- Based on independent scientific validation the measured insights have a 91% reliability

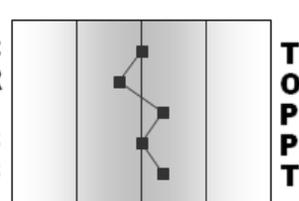
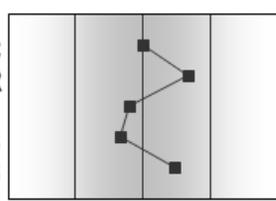
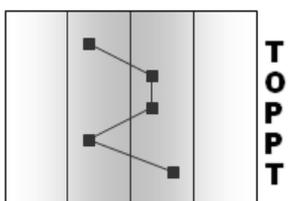
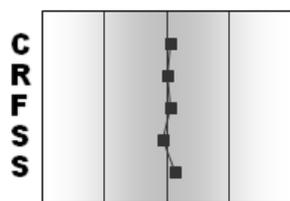
# 10 Core Work Life Profiles

Adapter

Community Builder

Engager

Facilitator

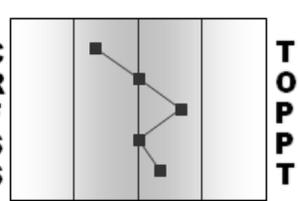
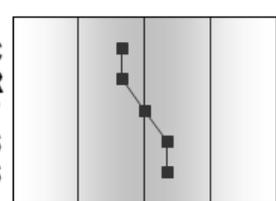
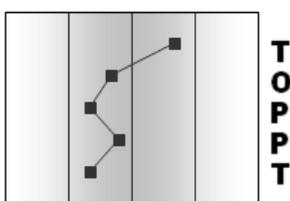
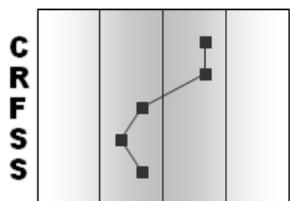


Influencer

Initiator

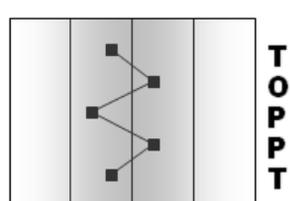
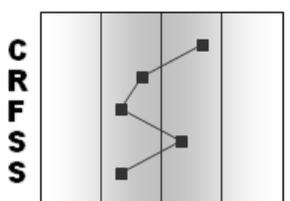
Reflective Thinker

Relationship Builder



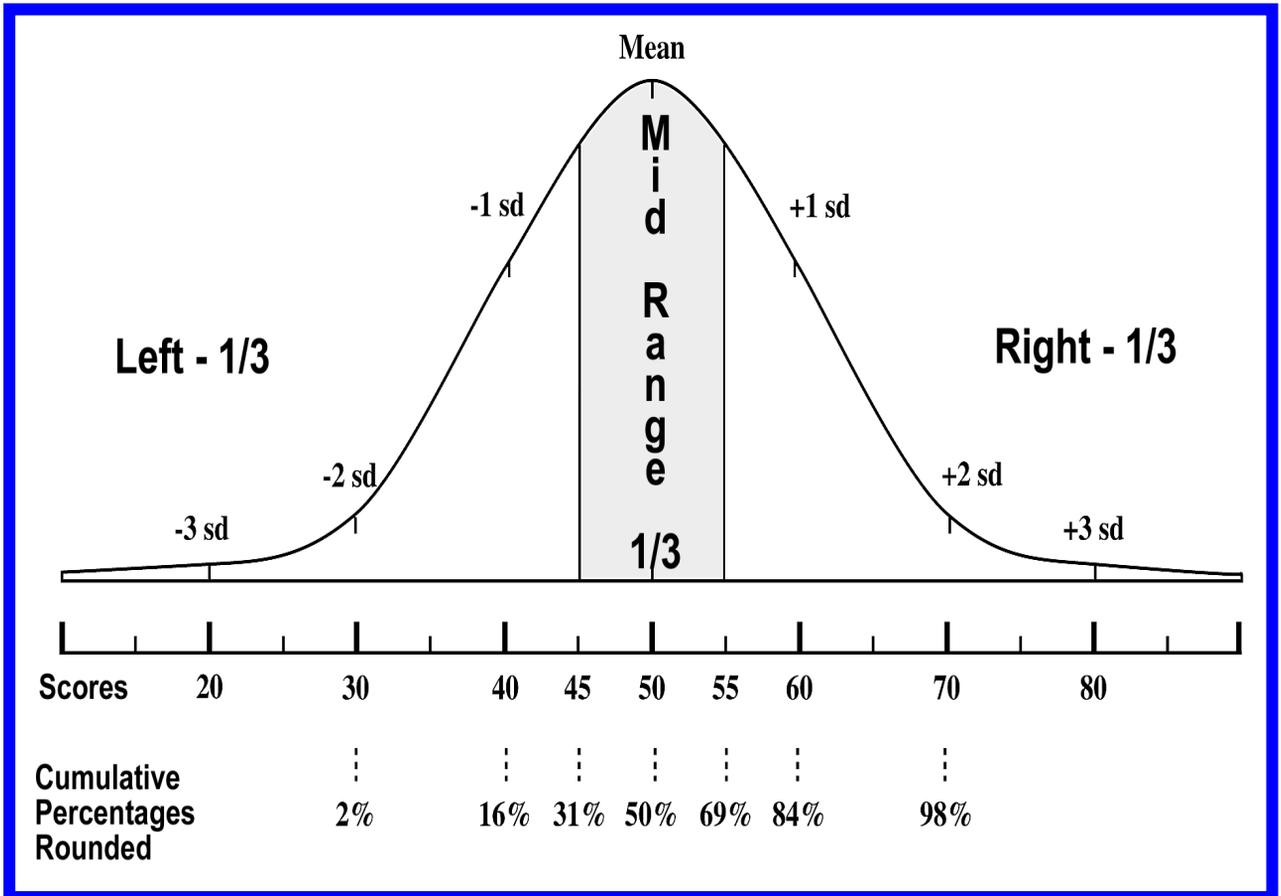
Strategist

Stylish Thinker



Factor		
C - Cooperative	1	T - Take Charge
R - Reserved	2	O - Outgoing
F - Fast-Paced	3	P - Patient
S - Spontaneous	4	P - Planned
S - Skeptical	5	T - Trusting

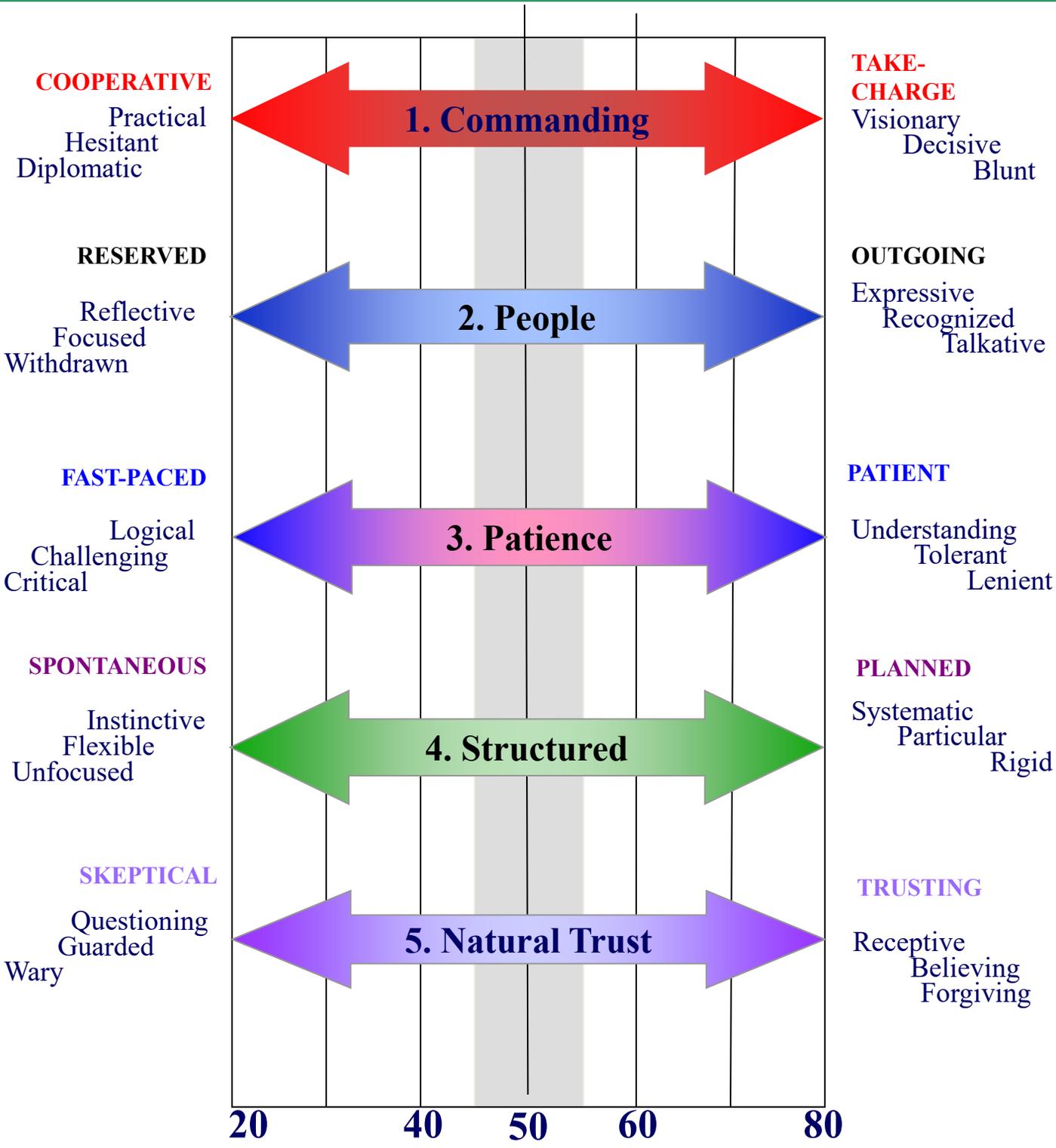
# Factor Measured Bell Curve Distribution



## Key Points:

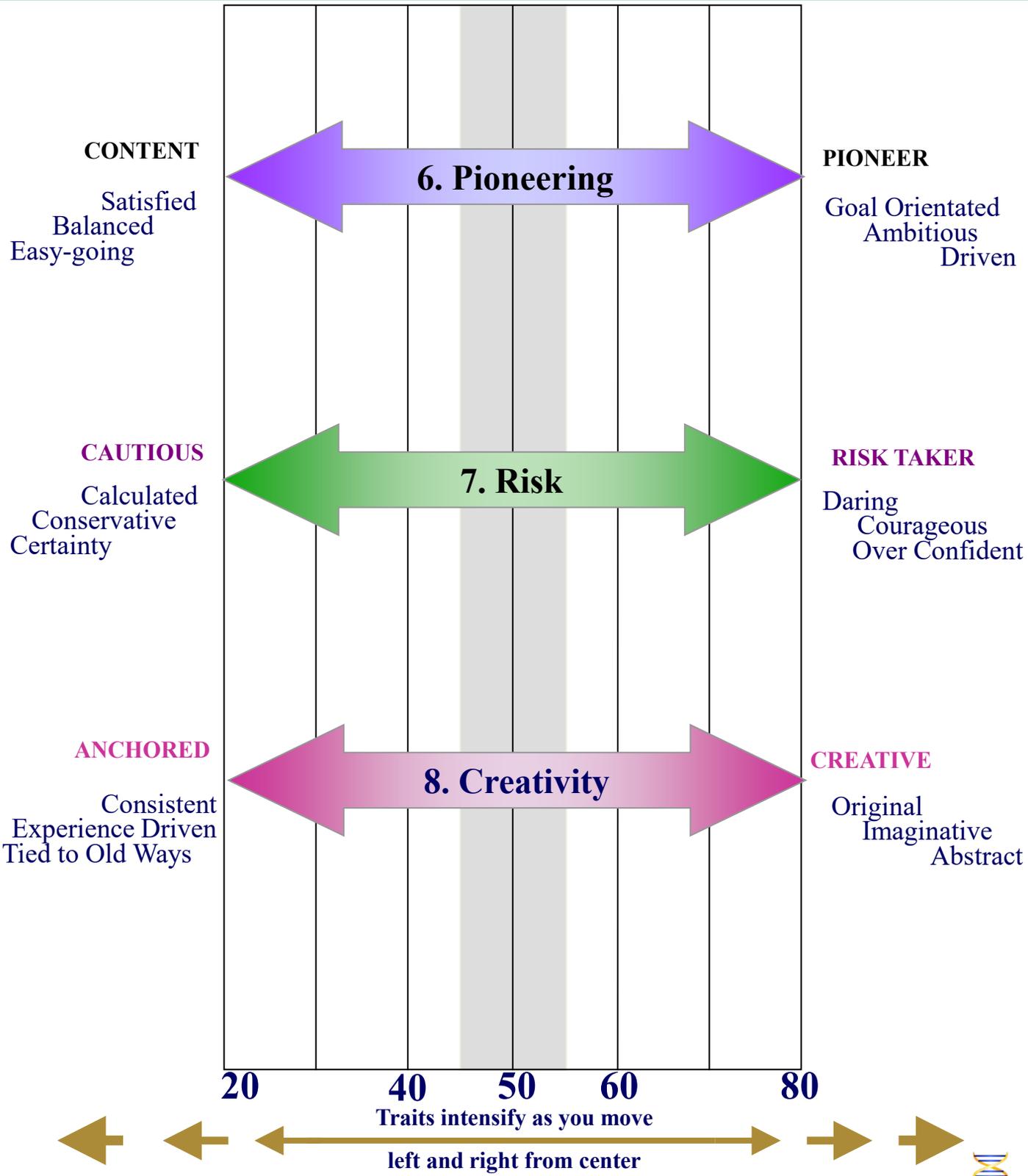
1. The strongest scores are 20 and 80. For instance, a score of 40 is equal in strength to a score of 60. Both have strengths and struggles of equal intensity.
2. The behaviors with scores over 60 and under 40 will be more ingrained into you. This will be where your greatest talents are and generally where you will be most comfortable making decisions. Also, under pressure these stronger behaviors are more likely to be experienced because your instincts will be naturally triggered. Very often money and relationships cause such pressure.

# Core Work Life Drivers



← ← ← Traits intensify as you move left and right from center → → →

# Work Life Planning Drivers



# ***Step 3:***

# ***The First Interview***

# ***Agenda***

# Design the First Interview Agenda

## The Goal: Ask “Powerful Hiring Questions”

- Ask General Hiring Questions
  - Address the Natural Talents Profile:
  - ALWAYS OPEN with a Profile Connection Question
  - Then, address the candidate’s Career Motivation based on 2 or 3 themes from the strongest profile traits
- 
- Refer below to the Powerful Hiring Questions based on the Profile factors
  - Refer to the Additional Powerful Questions for Specific Roles

# Examples of Powerful Hiring Questions

1. Tell me more about that?
2. What would that look like?
3. Why do you display this behavior?
4. What have the consequences of this behavior/attitude been?
5. How do you see that?
6. What would happen if?
7. How might that play out?
8. How did/does this make you feel?
9. How could you have responded/behaved differently?
10. How can you change this pattern in the future?
11. What would keep you from doing that?
12. What can you do to get there?
13. What would you have done in the past in that situation?
14. What would you like to do in the future?
15. To whom will you be accountable?
16. How will you measure your success?

# General Hiring Questions

1. What was your favorite position, and what role did your boss play in making it so unique?
2. What was your least favorite position? What role did your boss play in your career at that point?
3. Where do you see yourself in five years?
4. What is it about you that makes you get totally involved in your work to a point where you lose track of the time? What would your boss say about that?
5. Tell me about a time when you took action without getting your boss's prior approval
6. Describe the last time that you assumed responsibility for a task that was clearly outside of your job description
7. Give me an example of a time when you had to make a critical decision in your boss's absence
8. Tell me about a time when you felt it important to take it upon yourself to bring bad news to your boss? How could you have handled the situation differently? How would you handle the same situation in the future? What kind of outside influences affected the outcome of your actions? How would your boss have evaluated your decision in that situation?
9. What do you see as your greatest achievement?
10. What do you like about the company you are currently working for?
11. What areas do you want to learn more about?
12. What areas of skills do you need to improve upon in the next year?

# General Hiring Questions

13. What are you truly passionate about?
14. How have you had to reinvent or redefine your job to meet your company's changing needs? What proactive steps did you have to take to increase the output of your position?
15. What kind of mentoring and training are you expecting from the company?
16. Tell me about a team project that did not work out and why.
17. Every company has some dysfunctional behaviors – how dysfunctional was your last company, and how much tolerance do you have for dealing with a company's shortcomings and inconsistencies?
18. How do you approach your work from the standpoint of balancing your career with your personal life? Tell me about your last performance appraisal. In which area were you most disappointed? In hindsight, how could you have improved your performance?
19. Tell me what your current manager does well and could do better.
20. Where do you disagree with your boss most often? How did you handle the last time he/she was wrong and you were right?
21. How would your boss grade your ability to cope with last-minute change without breaking stride?
22. What do you like to do in your spare time?
23. What community interests do you have?
24. What do you do for self education?

# Profile Connection Questions

1. **How do you feel about your profile?**
2. What was the most accurate part of the profile?
3. What aspects do you agree with and disagree with?
4. What parts of the profiles do you not understand?
5. What is something new the profile has said about you?
6. Have the profiles identified differences with others?
7. Have you showed your spouse? If so, what do they think?
8. What do you believe are your greatest behavioral strengths/talents? (Candidate to mark on the Profile)
9. What parts of your behavioral style do you struggle with most? (Candidate to mark on the Profile)
10. How have you learned to adapt your behavior for different circumstances?

# Career Motivations

1. Identify dominant scores (under 40, over 60). Direct the **Powerful Hiring Questions** to these dominant scores as this will be where the candidate's greatest strengths and struggles are, and also the "issues". Consider questions on the following pages for those traits that are stronger.
2. In designing Powerful Hiring Questions, consider how the:
  - Strongest traits interact with other strong traits? eg How does a strong detached trait relate to high adventure?
  - Stronger traits interact/change the mid-range traits eg How does a high adventure trait relate to mid-range extroversion or conscientiousness?
  - Profile factor relationships change for:
    - Financial
    - Career
    - Family
    - Life

# ***Examples of Powerful Hiring Questions based on the Profile Factors***

# Focusing Your Selection of Powerful Questions

## Methodology

Identify dominant scores (under 40, over 60). Direct your **Powerful Hiring Questions** to these dominant scores as this will be where the person's greatest strengths and struggles are, and also the "issues". Consider questions on the following pages for those traits that are stronger.

## For Chris

Ask Powerful Questions from the following factors:

1. Risk Taker
2. Fast-paced
3. Take Charge

## For John

Ask Powerful Questions from the following factors:

1. Planned
2. Cautious
3. Outgoing

## Instruction

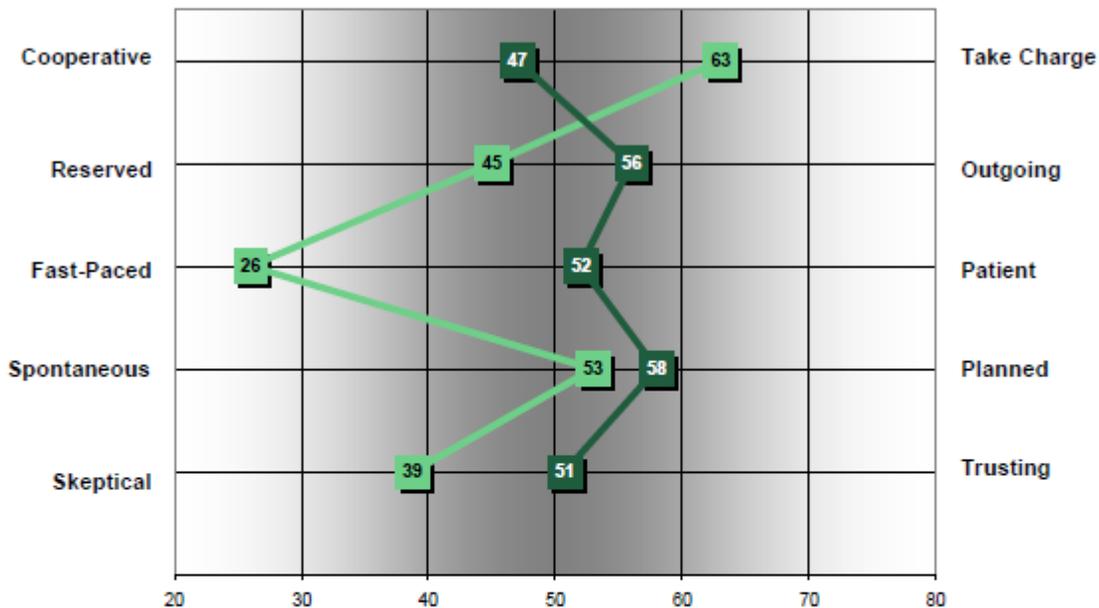
1. Regardless of whether the person's strongest factor/sub-factors are high or low the questions can be similar. For instance, if a person is very adventurous or cautious the question could be similar. For instance, "Tell me about a situation when you have taken a big risk?" or "What does taking risk mean to you?" Remember the goal is to draw the person out in this area.

# Chris Coddington & John Smith Comparison Graph

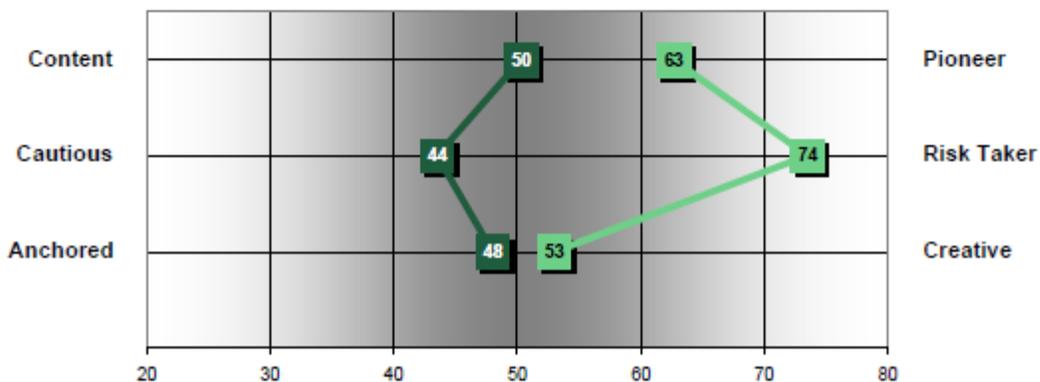
Chris - Strategist

John - Stylish Thinker

## Core Work Life Drivers



## Work Life Planning Drivers

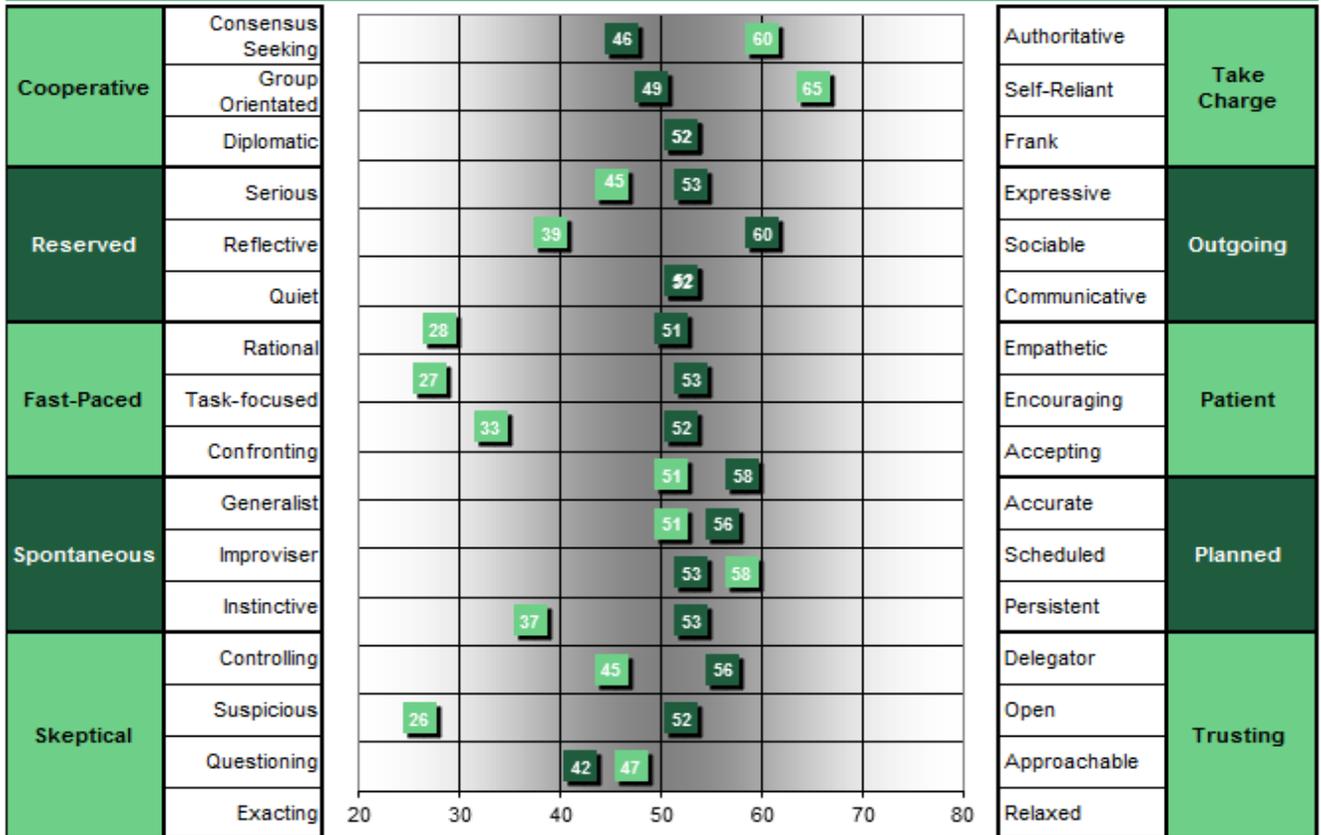


# Chris Coddington & John Smith Comparison Sub-factors

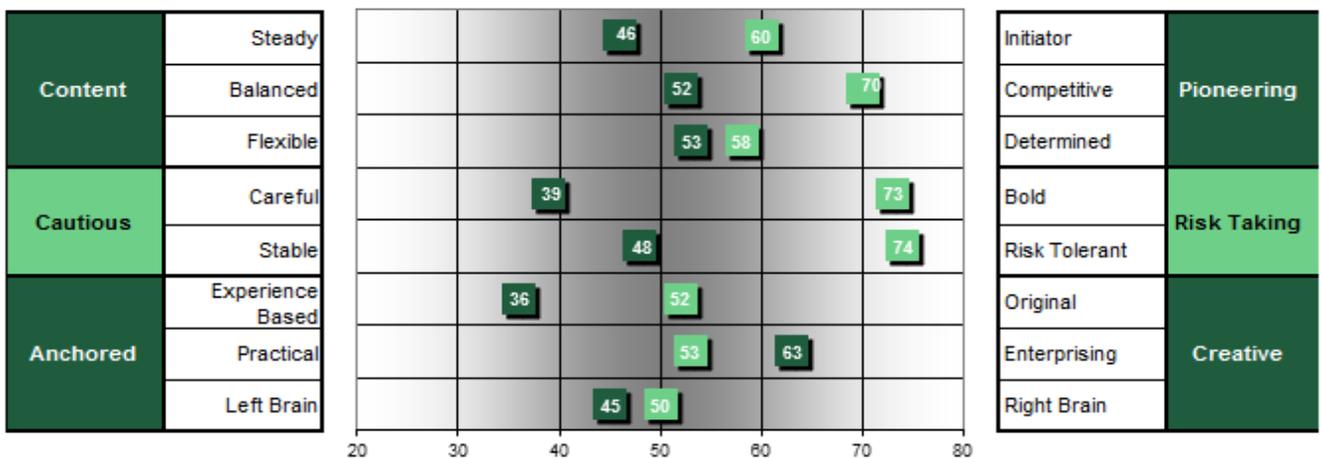
Chris - Strategist

John - Stylish Thinker

## Core Work Life Drivers



## Work Life Planning Drivers



# Workplace Insights

**Chris**

**John**

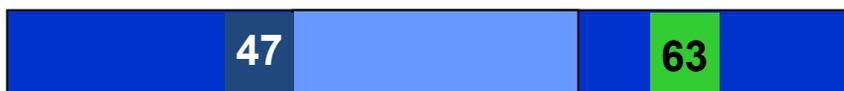
	<b>Chris</b>	<b>John</b>
1. Desire to Lead	High	Medium
2. Relationships	Low	High
3. Results	High	Medium
4. Setting Goals	High	Medium
5. Pursuing Goals	High	Medium
6. New Solution Driven	High	Medium
7. Detailed	Medium	Medium
8. Direct Communication	High	Medium
9. Difficult Conversations	High	Medium
10. New Account Sales	High	Medium
11. Quick Decision-Making	High	Low
12. Need for Control	High	Medium

# Factor 1: Commanding Powerful Questions

*Chris*

*John*

Cooperative



Take Charge

1. What goals would be important for you to achieve in your career?
2. What factors motivate the goals you set?
3. How do you plan to build your career?
4. Tell me about how you influence others to get a project completed?
5. Discuss how you would sell your products, solutions or ideas to others who have to be convinced?
6. Tell me about a conversation where you did not agree with the view of another person. How did you handle it?

# Authoritative Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**

**Consensus Seeking**



**Authoritative**

1. Tell me about situations you have successfully taken charge of in setting the agenda?
2. Discuss some situations when you have taken initiative? Have you taken too little or too much initiative at times?
3. What is your approach to managing other people?
4. What type of atmosphere do you create for having conversations with others?
5. How well do you truly listen to the needs of others?
6. How do you get the buy-in of others in making decisions others may be opposed to?

# Self-reliant Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

*Chris*

*John*



1. What is your comfort in working with others to accomplish tasks?
2. Tell me about your relationships with co-workers?
3. Tell me about when you have successfully collaborated with others to get a project or job done?
4. How do you communicate with your team about your ideas and the status of projects?
5. Tell me about a situation when you have had to make an instant decision and then inform your superior later?
6. How would you feel about committing to an accountability plan?

# Frank Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

*Chris*

*John*

Diplomatic



Frank

1. How does direct communication impact your working relationships?
2. What would keep you from saying something important in a conversation?
3. How do you deal with a person who is not performing as planned?
4. Tell me about a difficult conversation you have had with a superior, co-worker or direct report? What about with a client?
5. What are some regrets you have had about conversations?
6. What have you done in the past when you have had a difficult conversation?

# Factor 2: People Powerful Questions

*Chris*

*John*

Reserved



Outgoing

1. What is important about building and maintaining successful relationships. How do you maintain them?
2. What do you do to show people you are listening to them?
3. Have you been able to stay focused on your work when others want your time?
4. Tell me about your best experience presenting? How did you prepare? What is a challenge for you in presenting?
5. Discuss a time when you built rapport quickly with someone under difficult circumstances.

# Expressive Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**



1. Tell me about how you manage your emotions when conversing with others and making decisions?
2. How do you show your feelings?
3. How does your level of enthusiasm impact others?
4. Have you experienced how your response to questions or situations might confuse others?
5. Have you ever had to sell an idea to your co-workers or group? How did you do it? Did they buy it?
6. Considering your natural perspectives and operating style, would you see yourself as more of an optimist or realist? Under most situations would you be likely to be too optimistic or too pessimistic? How have you handled that in the past?

# Sociable Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

*Chris*

*John*

Reflective



Sociable

1. How do you gather new information?
2. Tell me about the personal and business networks you have developed?
3. Do you prefer to work most of the time alone, or with others?
4. What do you enjoy about entertaining people?
5. Have there been times when you have had multiple social obligations relating to your work? How did you experience these?
6. How do you like to be remembered by others?

# Communicative Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**



1. Help me understand the conversations that you enjoy having?
2. What is the best way for you to communicate?
3. Describe a time when you had to use your verbal communication skills in order to get a point across that was important to you?
4. What would keep you from verbalizing your thoughts?
5. How do you find it when you are around others who talk a lot?

# Factor 3: Patience Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**

Fast-Paced

26

52

Patient

1. Tell me about how you approach making difficult decisions?
2. How do you typically deal with conflict? Give me an example.
3. Give an example of a heated debate or discussion on an important issue at work and how you responded.
4. What is your approach to getting results? How do you manage performance?
5. In your past work experiences, what stresses you the most, periods of consistent change or longer periods where things stay the same? Can you give an example?

# Empathetic Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

*Chris*

*John*

Rational

28

53

Empathetic

1. How do you communicate with someone who is going through a difficult transition?
2. How do you deal with your mistakes from taking a chance?
3. Tell me about how you hold people accountable?
4. Have you ever experienced being taken advantage of?

# Encouraging Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**



1. How do you support others to achieve their goals?
2. What do you value the most?
3. What is important for you in building great relationships with others?
4. When working on a team project have you ever had an experience where there was strong disagreement among team members? What did you do?
5. Tell me about a successful partnership you have had or have?

# Accepting Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**



1. What is your need for fast action and results?
2. Have you made quick changes and had regret later?
3. How do you measure the success of your choices?
4. How do you handle people asking you questions?
5. Give an example of when you got angry about a decision at work. What did you do? How did you manage it?

# Factor 4: Structured Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**

Spontaneous



Planned

1. Tell me about a challenging goal that you have pursued?
2. What do you value most from other team members?
3. How do you handle being put on the spot or when you get surprised by a question? Give an example to illustrate.
4. When was the last time that you made a key decision on the spur of the moment? What was the reason and result?
5. Tell me about an energy draining work place situation or interaction?

# Accurate Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**

**Generalist**



**Accurate**

1. Discuss a time when you had to analyze information and make a recommendation. What kind of thought process did you go through? What was the reasoning behind your decision?
2. How much detail do you need to make decisions?
3. Are you better at giving a quick general estimate or at giving precise, well thought out answers? Give an example to illustrate how you have done this in the past?
4. Tell me about a poor decision you have made from not doing enough research?
5. What would keep you from making a decision based on instincts?

# Scheduled Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**

**Improviser**



**Scheduled**

1. How do you keep your focus?
2. How do you find enough time to do everything?
3. Explain about a situation when your expectations were not managed?
4. When do you feel out of control?
5. Discuss a time when you organized or planned an event that was very successful
6. When was the last time you made a key decision on the spur of the moment? What was the reason for the result?

# Procedural Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**

**Instinctive**



**Procedural**

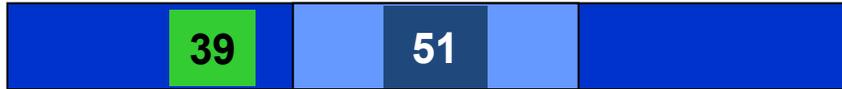
1. Tell me about how you deal with sudden changes?
2. How do you set boundaries in taking on tasks and getting them completed?
3. What would you like to do more of in the future to focus on your life?
4. What processes and procedures have you established to manage your work flows?
5. How have you motivated yourself to complete an assignment or task that you did not want to do?
6. Have you ever worked in a situation where the rules and guidelines were not clear? Tell me about it. How did you feel about it? How did you deal with it?

# Factor 5: Natural Trust Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**

**Skeptical**



**Trusting**

1. How could you be more successful by trusting others more?
2. In what circumstances have you been taken advantage of by not setting appropriate boundaries?
3. What is a fear for you? How could you overcome it?
4. What processes do you use to review new information that is provided to you?

# Delegator Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

*Chris*

*John*

Controlling



Delegator

1. How comfortable do you feel delegating responsibility to others?
2. To what extent will you give people discretion to make decisions?
3. How do you get input from others before making important decisions??
4. What has been the outcome when you have delegated in the past?

# Open Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**

**Suspicious**



**Open**

1. Are you comfortable sharing information?
2. What benefits have you had from sharing information with others in the past?
3. How do you feel when others do not share information with you?
4. Why is it important to be transparent?

# Approachable Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**

Questioning

26

52

Approachable

1. How have you found your relationships improve by being more approachable?
2. What could you do to change the way you ask questions so that your conversations will improve?
3. What is the consequence for you of being too friendly with business associates?
4. What is the impact of being too curious?

# Relaxed Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

*Chris*

*John*



1. How could you empower people more?
2. What is your process for managing your team?
3. In what ways have you got in the way of your own success?
4. Do you have difficulty making committed decisions?

# Factor 6: Pioneering Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**



1. What are some of the most recent goals you have set?
2. How are you progressing towards achieving your goals?
3. What can get in the way of you achieving goals?
4. Do you ever find yourself restless and wanting to move into new areas?

# Initiator Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**



1. What motivates you?
2. What is your process for setting goals?
3. Do you have a clear vision of what you want?
4. Are you comfortable to support another person's goals that may be different to yours?

# Competitive Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**



1. How important for you is it to be seen as successful?
2. How would you define success?
3. What would you sacrifice for success?
4. Will you ever retire?

# Determined Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

*Chris*

*John*



1. How do you maintain a balanced life?
2. What would you like to do more of in the future to focus on your life?
3. Tell me about your track record in following through on goals?
4. How important is it for you to achieve goals that you have committed to?

# Factor 7: Risk Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**



1. Tell me about the risks you have taken in your life?
2. What types of opportunities do you want to pursue?
3. Tell me about a courageous goal you have set?
4. What safety nets do you need in your life?

# Bold Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**

Careful

39

73

Bold

1. How do you assess the merits of taking a risk?
2. Tell me about how you approached a new opportunity that was presented?
3. Are you comfortable not to take a risk even though the opportunity has significant potential?
4. How has not taking a risk played out for you?

# Risk Tolerant Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**

**Stable**



**Risk Tolerant**

1. How do you react when chances you take do not work out?
2. Do you understand the impact taking risks may cause on other people in your life?
3. Have you got a plan for how you will re-build your finances if taking a risk does not work out?
4. Are you able to take advantage of opportunities that come from making mistakes?

# Factor 8: Creativity Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**

**Anchored**



**Creative**

1. Explain what you enjoy about innovation?
2. How would new products and solutions be received by you?
3. What are you passionate about?
4. How do you feel when you participate in brain-storming sessions?

# Original Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**

**Experience  
Based**



**Original**

1. What do you value in new ideas?
2. What would keep you from being an early adopter of a new product?
3. In what situations do you feel overwhelmed?
4. Explain what results you have got from taking initiative with ideas?

# Enterprising Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**

**Practical**



**Enterprising**

1. Tell me about a new idea or solution that you have implemented?
2. Tell me how you go about dealing with problems?
3. What information is important to you when presented with a new solution that is not proven?
4. What is your comfort level in exploring new avenues to achieve your goals?

# Right Brain Sub-Factor Powerful Questions

**Chris**

**John**

**Left Brain**



**Right Brain**

1. Tell me about a controversial or futuristic idea you have explored?
2. How do you prefer to go about reviewing new ideas?
3. How do you go about managing and protecting your ideas?
4. If you could change your career what would you rather be doing?

# ***Examples of Additional Powerful Hiring Questions for Specific Roles***

# Leadership Position Questions

1. What makes a great leader?
2. Describe your leadership style. Tell me of a situation where you successfully led a group?
3. What is the most difficult part of being a leader of people?
4. What do others say about your leadership? Tell me about the feedback you have been given on your strengths and struggles?
5. What is your greatest leadership success? Tell me how that happened?
6. Tell me about your confidence to introduce change in an organization. How will you go about it?
7. Describe how you have addressed a problem business unit. How were productivity and the people affected?
8. What is the most difficult decision you have had to make? Why did it seem the most difficult?
9. Tell me about the most difficult conflict that you have had to deal with as a leader? How did you manage it? What was the outcome?
10. How important is it that you make the decisions?
11. What type of work place environment would you like for yourself and/or your team? What environment does your team want? What will the culture be?

# Sales Position Questions

1. Right now, where do you rank amongst your peers in terms of sales production?
2. Describe a difficult negotiation in which you were involved. How did you deal with it? What were the outcomes for you and the other party?
3. How do you define your sales style? What is your balance between achieving the short term quota, quality and long-term relationships? How do you maintain this balance? How many prospects do you see to close a sale?
4. Describe 2 or 3 objections you currently face. How do you handle them?
5. What is the most difficult decision you have had to make in selling to a client?
6. How do you define your closing style?
7. Tell me about when you have failed to meet quota. How often has this happened? What plans of action do you put in place?
8. Tell me about when you have had your greatest success in sales. What was the product or service? How complex was it? What was the company environment and structure? How established was the product in the market?
9. Who is a role model for you in sales? What did this person do that you admire? Why do you think people fail in sales?
10. What remuneration structure are you expecting?

# Relationship Manager Position Questions

1. Describe a situation when you have hesitated in asking a client for the sale or recommending further products and services.
2. Have you experienced a long-standing client saying they now no longer want to use your products and services? What did you do to try and turn the situation around?
3. Describe a situation how you have used your creative thinking to respond to a client's objection.
4. What has been the biggest challenge to you in building new relationships? What have you done to work on this?
5. Give me an example of the most irrational, rude, and intimidating customer you had to deal with at your last position. How did you handle that situation? In retrospect, how could you have handled it differently?
6. Sometimes the only way to resolve a difference or conflict is through negotiation and compromise. Discuss a time when you were able to resolve a difficult situation by finding some common ground.
7. How do you build relationships to improve results?
8. Discuss a situation when you have had to confront a client. How did it turn out? How did it feel to you? How do you think the other person felt?
9. How important is the base salary component to you?

# Administration Position Questions

1. Have you held jobs in the past that required little attention to detail or a great attention to detail. Give an example to illustrate this example.
2. Discuss a job or setting where great attention to detail was required to complete a task. How did you handle that situation?
3. Developing and using a detailed procedure is often very important in a job. Tell me about a time when you needed to develop and use a detailed procedure to successfully complete a project.
4. Describe a situation in which you had no clear guidelines and had to improvise on the spot. How did this work out?
5. How do you handle being put on the spot or when you get surprised by a question? Give an example to illustrate.
6. What pace do you work at? What is more important between the pace and quality of what you do?
7. How would you describe the amount of structure, direction, and feedback that you need to excel?
8. Have you had experience of working in a business where the procedures were not clearly established? How did you handle this? Are you able to design and communicate to the team what the procedures should be?
9. What is your approach with people (eg sales) who are always trying to push their way through and by-pass procedures? How would your boss grade your ability to cope with last-minute change without breaking stride?

# Operations Position Questions

1. Which of your jobs had the most rapid change? How did you feel about it?
2. What do you do when priorities change quickly? Give one example of when this happened?
3. Do you consider your technical abilities basic, intermediate, or advanced? What are some projects you have completed with software programs? What are the software programs that you use?
4. What is your ability to communicate with upper-level management, customers and peers?
5. How would you grade your ability to predict needs before they arise? In other words, how would you evaluate your intuition, timeliness, and proactive business style?
6. In what areas do you typically have the least amount of patience at work?
7. Tell me about the last time that you brought a project to a smooth completion?
8. When you have hit a major obstacle in getting a project completed, how have you handled it. How do you communicate to your manager? How did you get it back on track?
9. Tell me about the last time that you chose to bring to your boss's attention something she did that hurt your feelings or took you for granted? Do you openly discuss those kinds of issues as soon as they occur? Do you hold them in until you are ready to burst?

# ***Step 4:***

# ***Second Interview***

# ***Questions***

# Second Interview Questions

**Note:** Questions from the First Interview Questions can be used here

1. Why do you want to work here?
2. What do you know about our company?
3. Tell me about your understanding of the job you are applying for?
4. Tell me again why you feel the position you are applying for meets your career needs or why working for our company is so important to you?
5. What would have to change at your present position for you to continue working there?
6. If we gave you an offer right now, would your boss try to keep you?
7. What can you do for us if we hire you, and when shall we expect concrete results?

# ***Step 5: Reference Screening Questions***

# Reference Screening Questions

1. How structured an environment would you say this individual needs to reach her maximum potential?
2. Does this individual typically adhere strictly to job duties, or does he assume responsibilities beyond the basic, written job description?
3. Please comment on the person's ability to accept constructive criticism
4. How much do outside influences play a role in her job performance?
5. Would you consider this individual more of a task orientated or project-orientated worker?
6. How does he handle interruptions, breaks in routine and last minute changes?
7. How would you grade her commitment to project completion?
8. How would you grade this candidate's capacity for analytical thinking and problem solving?
9. Does this individual need close supervision to excel, or does she take more of an autonomous, independent approach to her work?
10. How would you grade this candidate's listening skills?
11. How effective is the candidate at delivering bad news? Will he typically assume responsibility for things gone wrong?

# Reference Screening Questions

12. Please grade the individual's capacity for initiative and taking action. Does she have a tendency to get bogged down in analysis paralysis?
13. In terms of this person's energy level, how would you grade his capacity for hustle?
14. How does this individual approach taking action without getting prior approval?
15. Is it this person's natural inclination to report to someone else for sign off, or does she operate better with independent responsibility and authority?
16. How does the person cope with pressure?
17. Is this person inclined to maintain smooth and amicable relations at all costs, or is she more likely to show her teeth when faced with adversity?
18. Does the person stay open to all sides of an argument before reaching a decision, or does he get personally involved in conflicts?

# ***Section 2:***

# ***Candidate Interview Questions***

# Objectives of Candidate Interview Questions

**Your goal as the candidate is to ask questions to:**

1. Establish whether the company culture and working environment will meet your requirements.
2. Match your talents to the right role.
3. Identify whether the role as represented is actually what you will be doing and there is a career path.
4. Gain deeper insights into the company's operations.
5. Build a relationship with your prospective employer and the team based on demonstrating serious interest in the role and the business.

# Candidate Interviewing With Powerful Questions

**Step 1**

**Candidate Pre-Interview Screening Questions**

**Step 2**

**Candidate First Interview Questions**

**Step 3**

**Additional Powerful Hiring Questions for High Level Positions**

**Step 4**

**Candidate Second Interview Questions**

**Step 5**

**Candidate Closing Questions**

***Step 1:***

***Candidate Pre-  
Interview  
Screening  
Questions***

# Candidate's Pre-Interview Questions

## Questions asked after submitting the resume

1. May I have a written job description?
2. Where is the position located?
3. Where is the company headquartered?
4. To whom does the position report?
5. Can you tell me about your leadership style?
6. What happened to the person who previously held this position?
7. Is this a new position?
8. How long has the position been open?
9. How long have you been working on the assignment?
10. What does the position pay?
11. Are there any pay or compensation constraints that I should take into consideration?
12. Who will make the final hiring decision?
13. When are you expecting to make the final hiring decision?
14. Can you describe, specifically, how the company navigates/balances work? and personal life issues?
15. What might I do that would violate the culture of the company during my interview?
16. What steps will you take to keep this confidential?

# Questions for Headhunters and Recruiters

1. How did you find me?
2. Who referred me to you?
3. What do you know about me?
4. Is this a retainer or contingency assignment?
5. Are you dealing with the client's HR people, or do you have direct contact with the hiring manager?
6. How long has the client been with you?
7. How many candidates have you placed with this client?
8. When will I find out the name of the principal or client company?
9. May I have a written job description?
10. Where is the position located?
11. Where is the company headquartered?
12. To whom does the position report?
13. Can you tell me about this executive's leadership style?

# Questions for Headhunters and Recruiters

14. Why is the position open?
15. What happened to the person who previously held this position?
16. Is this a new position?
17. How long has the position been open?
18. How long have you been working on the assignment?
19. What does the position pay?
20. Are there any pay or compensation constraints that I should take into consideration?
21. What can you tell me about the person who will be interviewing me?
22. What is his or her position, title, management style?
23. Who will make the final hiring decision?
24. After you present my resume, when can I expect to hear from you regarding the status of this position?
25. Can you describe, specifically, how the company navigates/balances work? and personal life issues?
26. What might I do that would violate the culture of the company during my interview?
27. What steps will you take to keep this confidential?

# ***Step 2:***

# ***Candidate First***

# ***Interview***

# ***Questions***

# Typical Candidate Interview Questions

1. Why is this position open?
2. Is this a new position? If not, what did the previous employee go on to do?
3. How often has it been filled in the past five years? What were the main reasons?
4. This is a new position. What are the forces that suggested the need for this position?
5. How do you decide between recruiting from within or going outside the company?
6. How would you describe the responsibilities of the position?
7. Would you describe for me the actions of a person who previously achieved success in this position?
8. Would you describe for me the actions of a person who previously performed poorly in this position?
9. What are some of the skills and abilities necessary for someone to succeed in this job?
10. How would you describe a typical week/day in this position? Is overtime expected?
11. What kind of work can I expect to be doing in the first year?
12. What percentage of routine, detailed work will I encounter?
13. How much travel is expected?
14. Is relocation a possibility?
15. What is the company's policy for relocation to other cities?

# Typical Candidate Interview Questions

16. How important does upper management consider the function of this department/position?
17. How does upper management perceive this part of the organization?
18. What is the organization's plan for the next five years, and how does this department fit in?
19. Could you explain your organizational structure?
20. Could you describe your company's management style and the type of employee who fits well with it?
21. Please tell me more about the people with whom I'll be working most closely?
22. Who does this position report to? If I am offered the position, can I meet him/her?
23. What is your management style?
24. What are the most important traits you look for in a subordinate?
25. How do you like your subordinates to communicate with you?
26. What personal qualities or characteristics do you most value?
27. What would you like done differently by the next person who fills this position?
28. How many people work in this office/department?
29. What are some of the objectives you would like to see accomplished in this job?
30. What do you see as some of the most important opportunities for improvement in the area I hope to join?

# Typical Candidate Interview Questions

31. What is most pressing? What would you like to have done in the next 3 months?
32. What are some of the long term objectives you would like to see completed?
33. What areas of the position would you like to see improvement in with regard to the person who was most recently performing these functions?
34. What are some of the more difficult problems one would have to face in this position?
35. How do you think these could best be handled?
36. What type of support does this position receive in terms of people, finances. etc?
37. What freedom would I have in determining my own work objectives, deadlines, and methods of measurement?
38. How much opportunity will I have for decision-making in my first assignment?
39. Can you describe an ideal employee?
40. What are the company's strengths and weaknesses compared to its competition?
41. What are the company's three most important goals?
42. How do you see this position impacting the achievement of those goals?
43. In what ways has this organization been most successful in terms of products and services over the years?

# Typical Candidate Interview Questions

44. Will the company be expanding or bringing on new products or services that I should be aware of ?
45. What significant changes do you foresee in the near future? How much opportunity is there to see the end result of my efforts?
46. How is one evaluated in this position?
47. Who will review my performance? How often?
48. What accounts for success within the company? What are the prospects for growth and advancement?
49. How does one advance in the company? Are there any examples?
50. Does the company have a structured career path?
51. Do the most successful people in the company tend to come from one area eg sales?
52. How much guidance or assistance is made available to individuals in developing career goals?
53. What attracted you to working for this organization?
54. What do you like about working here?
55. What don't you like about working here and what would you change?
56. How do you describe the philosophy of the company?
57. Does the company have a mission statement? May I see it?
58. Corporate culture is very important, but it's usually hard to define until one violates it. What is one thing an employee might do here that would be perceived as a violation of the company's culture?

# Typical Candidate Interview Questions

59. How would you characterize the organization? What are its principal values? What are its greatest challenges?
60. If I were to be employed here, what one piece of wisdom would you want me to incorporate into my work life?
61. What are a couple of misconceptions people have about the company?
62. Work-life balance is an issue of retention as well as productivity. Can you talk about your own view of how to navigate the tensions between getting work done and encouraging healthy lives outside the office?
63. How does the company support and promote personal and professional growth?
64. What is the company's policy on attending seminars, workshops, and other training opportunities?
65. What is the company's learning plan for me in the first 6 months?
66. What types of software and technology systems does the company use?
67. What types of people seem to excel here?
68. What is the company's commitment to equal opportunity and diversity?
69. Every company contends with office politics. It's a fact of life because politics is about people working together. Can you give me some examples of how politics plays out in this company?
70. What have I yet to learn about this company and opportunity that I still need to know?

# Typical Candidate Interview Questions

71. Would you like a list of references?
72. If I am extended a job offer, how soon would you like me to start?
73. What more can I tell you about my qualifications?
74. When can I expect to hear from you?
75. What is the next step in your interview process?
76. Are there any other questions I can answer for you?

# Questions Not To Ask

- What does this company do? (Do your research ahead of time!)
- If I get the job when can I take time off for vacation? (Wait until you get the offer to mention prior commitments)
- Can I change my schedule if I get the job? (If you need to figure out the logistics of getting to work don't mention it now...)
- Did I get the job? (Don't be impatient. They'll let you know.)

***Step 3:***  
***Examples of***  
***Additional***  
***Powerful Hiring***  
***Questions for***  
***High Level***  
***Positions***

# Additional Questions for High Level Positions

1. How will my leadership responsibilities and performance be measured? By whom?
2. What committees and task forces will I be expected to participate in?
3. Are there any weaknesses in the department that you are particularly looking to improve?
4. What are the department's goals, and how do they align with the company's mission?
5. I know that teamwork is highly regarded. But evaluating performance of teams can be difficult. How does the company evaluate team performance? For example, does it employ 360-degree feedback programs?
6. What are the organization's primary financial objectives and performance measures?
7. What is the budget this department operates with?
8. What's the gross profit margin of the division I will be working in? What percentage of the total profit from the company does it generate? Is it increasing or decreasing?
9. What operating guidelines or metrics are used to monitor the planning process and the results?
10. To what extent are those objectives uniform across all product lines?
11. How does the company balance short-term performance versus long-term success?

# Additional Questions for High Level Positions

12. What kinds of formal strategic planning systems, if any, are in place?
13. Can you describe the nature of the planning process and how decisions concerning the budgeting process are made?
14. Can you identify the key corporate participants in the planning process?
15. How often and in what form does the company report its results internally to its employees?
16. In the recent past, how has the company acknowledged and rewarded outstanding performance?
17. What are the repercussions of having a significant variance to the operating plan?
18. Are budgeting decisions typically made at corporate headquarters, or are the decisions made in a more decentralized fashion?
19. I'm glad to hear that I will be part of a team. Let me ask about reward structures for teams. Does the company have a formal team-based compensation process?
20. Is the company more of an early adapter of technology, a first mover, or is it content to first let other companies work the bugs out and then implement a more mature version of the technology?
21. How does the company contribute to thought leadership in its market?

# Additional Questions for High Level Positions

22. How advanced is the company's commitment to knowledge management?
23. I was pleased to hear you describe the company's branding strategy. How does branding fit into the overall marketing mix?
24. How does this position contribute to the company's goals, productivity, or profits?
25. What's your company's "killer application"? What percentage of the market share does it have? Will I be working on it?
26. I understand your principal competitor, Brand Z, is the best-selling product in the space. What does Brand Z do better than your product?
27. How accessible is the CEO (name him or her) to people at my level of the organization?
28. Does the CEO (name him or her) publish his or her email address?
29. I understand that the CEO is really approachable. Are there ground rules for approaching him or her?
30. When top performers leave the company, why do they leave and where do they usually go?
31. When was the last significant layoff? What criteria were used to select those to stay?
32. Staff development is mentioned in your annual report as a measure on which executives are evaluated. What kinds of training experiences might I expect?
33. Can you please tell me about the people who will look to me for supervision?

# Additional Questions for High Level Positions

34. Who are the "coolest" people on my team? What makes them cool? Can I meet them? Who is the best and worst performer on the team, and what was the difference in their total compensation last year? Sell me on this team and the individuals on it that I get to work with. What makes my closest co-workers fun great people to work with?
35. Which individual in the department can I learn the most from? What can he or she teach me? Can I meet that person? Does the company have a specific program to advance my career?
36. Would I encounter any co-worker or staff person who's proved to be a problem in the past?
37. Can you give me some examples of the best and worst aspects of the company's culture?
38. What makes this company a great place to work? What outside evidence (rankings or awards) do you have to prove this is a great place to work? What is the company going to do in the next year to make it better?
39. What would I see if I stood outside the front door at five o'clock? Would people be smiling? Staying late or leaving early? Would everyone be taking work home?
40. Can you show me that the company has a diverse workforce and that it is tolerant of individual differences? Does it have affinity groups or similar programs that I might find beneficial? Is there a dress code? Can you give me an example of any "outrageous conduct" this firm tolerates the competitors would not?
41. What is the company customer service philosophy?

# Additional Questions for High Level Positions

42. Could you tell me about a time when the team/company went out of its way to provide knock-your-socks-off service?
43. The best companies rely on rich customer data to fuel personalized content and services. How is the company doing in personalizing its offerings?
44. How empowered are employees? How much of the company's money can your people (including the ones with single-digit pay grades) spend on their own recognizance to satisfy a customer or address a work-process issue?
45. What is my spending/budget authority?
46. Give me some examples of the decisions I could make in this job without any approvals. Can you show me the degree of autonomy and control I have in this position?
47. How many approvals would it take (and how long) to get a new \$110,000 project idea of mine approved? What percentage of employee-initiated projects in this job were approved last year?
48. What inputs do employees get in departmental decisions? In hiring and assessing co-workers?
49. Could I get a chance to see the team in action? Can I sit in on a team meeting? Shadow someone for a day?
50. How often would I come into direct contact with real, living, breathing, paying customers?
51. What are the success factors that will tell you if the decision to bring me on board was the right one?

# Additional Questions for High Level Positions

52. To make our working relationship successful -- something we both want -- we'll need to be sure we have good chemistry together. How might we determine this, and then what action would you see us engage in to build that relationship?
53. If I were frustrated about my job, what specific steps would you take to help me overcome that frustration? How about if you were frustrated with me? Can you show me examples of what you have done for others in your group in the past year to overcome any frustration?
54. If you and I were developing some sort of philosophical difference, how would you want to go about resolving it? If for any reason you were unable to function as CEO, how would you like to see the company managed? How would you describe the degree to which you want your heirs to have strategic or operational influence in the company until one of them is ready to assume the role of COO or CEO?
55. Can you talk about how IT is used in this company to create top-line value? How is IT used to reduce bottom-line costs?
56. If you put all the salespeople in a line from your best to the merely acceptable performer, what are the earnings of the 50th percentile? The 25th? The 75th?
57. What percentage of the current people are above and below their set goals?

# ***Step 4:***

# ***Candidate Second***

# ***Interview***

# ***Questions***

# Candidate Questions Designed To Get Feedback

1. The First Interview Questions can be asked also.
2. How do you like me so far?
3. Do you have any concerns about my ability to do the job and fit in?
4. Is there anything standing in the way of us coming to an agreement?
5. Do you have any concerns about my experience, education, skills?
6. How do I compare with the other candidates you have interviewed?
7. Describe your ideal candidate. What do my qualifications lack compared to those of the theoretical ideal candidate?
8. I'm ready to make a decision based on the information I have. Is there anything else I can elaborate on so that you would have a better understanding of my qualifications and suitability for this position?
9. Are there any areas in which you feel I fall short of your requirements?
10. Can you give me any feedback that would make me more attractive to the company in the future or that I could benefit from next time?
11. Is there anything else you need from me to have a complete picture of my qualifications?

# Candidate Due Diligence Questions

1. I understand the company has experienced layoffs within the last two years. Can you review the reasons why they were necessary?
2. How were the layoffs handled in terms of notification, severance, outplacement services, etc.?
3. What rewards have you found effective in recognizing and rewarding exceptional work?
4. Are there formal metrics in place for measuring and rewarding performance over time?
5. How effectively has the company communicated its top three business goals?
6. I am a hard worker, and like to be around hard-working people. Am I going to be comfortable with the level of effort I find here?
7. Is the company's training strategy linked to the company's core business objectives?
8. How does your firm handle recognition for a job well done?
9. When was the last time you rewarded a subordinate for his or her efforts? What token of appreciation did you offer?
10. How does the firm recognize and learn from a brave attempt that didn't turn out quite as expected?

# Candidate Due Diligence Questions

11. If I were a spectacular success in this position after six months, what would I have accomplished?
12. Does your company offer any "wow!" benefits? Does it pay for advanced degrees? Does it offer paid sabbaticals? On-site child care? Relocation packages? Mentor programs? How are these superior to those of your competitors? What about job sharing? Flex-time arrangements? Telecommuting? Workout facilities?
13. How much freedom would I have in determining my objectives and deadlines?
14. How long has this position existed in the organization? Has its scope changed recently?
15. Do you foresee this job involving significant amounts of overtime or work on weekends?
16. What are the greatest challenges I will face in this position in furthering the agenda of the organization?
17. Are my tasks limited to my job description, or will I be performing duties outside the described job scope?
18. Am I able to see the recent financial statements of the company and management reports? How is the company's performance tracking?

# ***Step 5: Candidate Closing Questions***

# Candidate Closing Questions

1. Is there anything personally or professionally that you believe would prevent my being a solid contributor in this role?
2. Your search is over. You will not find anyone else more qualified to do this job than I. If I were you, I'd cancel all the other interviews and make me an offer.
3. I'm not going to keep it a secret. I really want this job, and I know I will be fantastic in it.
4. Until I hear from you again, what particular aspects of the job and this interview should I be considering?
5. I know I can meet the demands of the position and would make an outstanding contribution. Can I have the offer?
6. What will be your recommendation to the hiring committee?
7. I'm ready to make a decision based on the information I have. Is there anything else you need to make me an offer?
8. I am very interested in this job, and I know your endorsement is key to my receiving an offer. May I have your endorsement?
9. It sounds to me as if we have a great fit here. What do you think?
10. It has been an interesting and fruitful discussion. I would very much like to take it to the next step.

# Disclaimer and Contact Information

## Disclaimer

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