

# GENERAL VALUES HIRING QUESTIONS

## **VALUES QUESTIONS**

### **General Values Questions**

- Describe the values system under which you operate? What guiding principles help you make decisions?
- What attitudes in others do you find the most difficult to deal with?
- Describe 3 situations you liked best in your past job(s)? What were the key ingredients that made those situations so agreeable?
- What is the most fun for you at work? What is it about those situations that you enjoy?
- Describe 3 situations you liked least in your past job(s)?
- Describe the type of boss you work best under.
  - How would you like your co-workers to describe you? Ask the person to define the qualities they mention.

### **Integrity**

- What is the worst mistake you can make?
- When you make a mistake in your work what do you do? Describe your process for righting the situation.
- If you saw a co-worker make a mistake and not tell anyone, what would you do? (or describe an integrity issue from your office or lab and ask for their analysis)
- What sort of moral dilemmas have been the most difficult in your career?
- Tell me your definition of integrity.

### **Learning and gaining skills, taking on challenges**

- What steps do you take to continually reinvent yourself (or stay current with scientific or management trends)?

- What are some of your most memorable challenges? Tell me more...
- You find yourself at the top of a career ladder, what do you do to keep yourself challenged?

### **Loyalty/Reliability/ Commitment**

- What place does loyalty have in the office or lab?
- What demonstrates a strong sense of loyalty?
- What contributes to a committed lab or team? What steps would you take to achieve that?

### **Makes A Difference**

- What motivates you to work for one organization/lab/office over another?
- What is important to you in your work?

### **Mutual Respect and Trust**

- What are the most important attributes in a boss, your boss?
- Describe the relationship you would like with a boss.
- How do you rebuild trust if that has been lost in a relationship?
- What approach do you take when negotiating with people whose purpose and values are in conflict with your own?
- Describe how you would negotiate a situation where the other party's purpose is in conflict with yours? Give an example from your experience.
- If you discovered a staff person who was pushing their work off on a co-worker, what steps would you take to remedy the situation and make it less likely to happen again?
- What are your thoughts about maximizing the benefits of a diverse workforce?

### **Personal Responsibility**

- When you have no guidance on how to go about a new task what do you do?

- If a customer calls with a problem and the person who is responsible for that area will not be available for several days, what do you do?
- How would your co-workers describe you?
- What would they say you are working to improve?
- If you perceived a rift between your workgroup/office/division and another, what steps would you take to bridge the gap and restore a productive working relationship?

### **Politically Savvy**

- How can you tell when you need to stop and rethink your position, what signs do you get from people or the situation?
- When you recognize there is a need in your office what is your strategy for getting the need met?

### **Reliability**

- What about you can be relied upon?
- What expectations do you have of your peers - what do you expect them to do without being asked?

### **Recognition**

- What type of recognition would you most appreciate?
- How do you let your peers know you support them and appreciate the support they give you?

### **Respectful of Self and Others**

- What does self-respect mean to you?
- What things do you care about in your work environment?
- What types of behavior in a co-worker do you find unacceptable?
- How did you handle your biggest career disappointment?

## **DECISION STYLE**

### **Analytical**

- How did you decide to become a scientist/administrator?
- What are the steps that you take when analyzing an error that has occurred in an experiment/project/task?
- What skills do you use to anticipate issues before they become problems?

### **Assertive - Stands up for Self**

- You have a very rude and disrespectful contractor shouting at you and there is no one else around - what do you do to handle the situation?
- Your boss asks you to work extra and you have a prior commitment for that time period, what would you do?
- What steps do you take when you realize your good nature is being taken advantage of?
- Tell me about a time when there were objections to your ideas or solutions. What did you do to convince others to your point of view?
- Tell me about a time when you came up with a new program, plan or idea. How did you get it accepted and implemented?

### **Balance (ability to bring balance)**

- Describe a situation where you brought two parties toward a more balanced position and reached resolution on an issue.
- Is someone is intimidated by your role how do you relieve their anxiety?

### **Big Picture vs. Details**

- Do you start with gathering the facts and relevant regulations/data or do you consider the issues in their environment first?
- Why are the facts important?
- How can a manager create balance between the details and the big picture?

- If you are a detail person how do you keep the big picture in mind?

### **Calm and Centered**

- What techniques do you use to keep yourself detached from the emotions of an intense situation?
- How would your colleagues describe your demeanor?
- What skills do you use when working on a team or in a group when people are getting side tracked and losing sight of the real issues?

### **Career Oriented**

- What is your career mission?
- What kind of long-term goals are important in your career?
- What is important to you in your professional development?
- What do you do in your current job to learn more and develop yourself?
- What do you think accounts for the success you've had so far in your career?

### **Creativity/Variety**

- What types of work do you find stimulating?
- Describe the kind of work you would like to do in your perfect work day.
- If each day were a clean slate for you - how would you fill your day?
- How do you handle obstacles on the job? Find out what intrigues the person.
- How many different ways can you get into and out of that chair?
- Tell me about your most unusual solution to a work problem.

### **Congenial, Even-Tempered**

- What characteristics are important in customer relations?

- How do you respond to disrespectful remarks? Give me an example of how you did that.

### **Customer Service Oriented**

- When a customer complaint arrives at your desk - how do you view their problem?
- Describe how you work with customers?
- What do you consider are good values in providing customer service? Give examples.
- Give an example of how you turned a difficult customer into a happy customer.

### **Deals with a Wide Variety of People**

- How do you deal with people who will not listen to your response to their questions? Give an example of a situation like that.
- How do you handle a person who believes that their needs are always an emergency?  
Example?
- When you find you are having difficulty communicating with another person what do you do to reach rapport?

### **Demonstrable Empathy**

- Describe a difficult work situation that was made more complex because of the emotions involved.
- What are the most difficult employee issues?

### **Effective Communicator**

- Define cooperation.
- How important is effective communication in your current job? Tell me why.
- Tell me about a situation where you had difficulty communicating with a coworker or boss and how you resolved it.

**Feedback - Gets input from others**

- How do you go about problem solving, describe your process?
- What methods have you used to get feedback from the stakeholders in projects/committees you are responsible for?

**Flexible**

- When there are no guidelines and no policies for a particular issue - what do you do?
- How do you handle multiple/conflicting demands on your time?
- How do you set your daily priorities?
- What attributes are you working to improve? Ask for examples or for them to tell you more.
- How would your current co-workers describe you?
- Describe how you adapt to changing situations?
- How do you balance demands from customers, supervisor, and colleagues?

**Good Judgement**

- How do you know when you are in trouble with an experiment? What techniques do you use to get back to solid ground?
- If nothing works what do you do?

**Humor – uses appropriately**

- When your boss/co-worker is in a bad mood what is your response?
- When your teammates are discouraged what do you do?
- What are good ways to ease the tension in a stressful situation? Give an example.

**Independence**

- What do you need from a supervisor?
- How do you manage your supervisor?

**Leadership**

- When a meeting is going nowhere what do you do to move things to resolution?
- Describe your leadership style.

**Leadership Potential**

- How effectively does your current boss handle evaluations? What would you do differently?
- Do you set goals for yourself? What kinds of goals do you set and how to you go about reaching them?
- Describe the best manager you ever had. Describe the worst manager you ever had.
- Have you ever been an acting manager or supervisor? What did like about that role? What did you not like?

**Listening Skills**

- What do you do when you want to make sure that your employee/peer/supervisor knows you understand their point?
- What are your favorite methods for reassuring your staff/peer/supervisor that you are hearing their point?

**Open Communication Style**

- What place should personal problems have in the workplace?
- You need help because of a very heavy workload – how would you go about getting what you need?
- What approach works best for you when you need help?



**Organized**

- What is your approach to organizing your work area? Describe your desk/lab.
- What is important to you about your work area?
- Do you use any time management tools? How do you prioritize your time?
- Describe your approach in organizing your supervisor's calendar?
- How do you organize meetings?

**Perceiver vs. Judger**

- Describe your approach to determining who is right and who is wrong.
- Is keeping the options open an important idea to you? Why?

**Personable**

- What characteristics are important in customer relations?
- A co-worker starts crying at your desk, what do you do?

**Procedures vs. Options**

- What do you consider first, the parties involved and their interests or the regulatory areas involved in a particular situation?
- What is useful about policies/guidelines/regulations?

**Punctual**

- When do you arrive for meetings?
- Describe your relationship with time.
- What do you do when you realize you will not reach a deadline?

**Risk Taking**

- Tell me about a project/staff person that you went out on a limb for. Did it work out? Would you do it again?
- What have you learned about risk taking at work?
- What sort of support do you need to have to be comfortable taking risks?

**Takes Initiative**

- When you recognize there is a need in your office/program/lab what is your strategy for response?
- What do you like about being first?
- Give me an example of a problem that you faced, and how you solved it.
- Give me an example of how you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get the job done to your satisfaction.

**Team Player**

- What do you like about working on a team?
- What do you dislike about working on team?
- When you are working on a project with others what is your approach to the team process, what role do you prefer to play (leader, facilitator, organizer, worker)?

**Self Motivated**

- How do you see yourself interacting on a project/research team? What role would you play?
- What sort of relationship do you want with a supervisor?

**Learning Style** (Visual, Kinesthetic, Auditory)

Most people have one very strong learning style, a second that they are comfortable in and the third they are the least comfortable in. (e.g. when people get tired they get less capable in one learning style first - they

get clumsy if they are not very kinesthetic, they can't see when they look at things - if they are less comfortable visually, etc.).

To find out the learning style of the person you are interviewing, ask questions like these:

How do you like to learn new information?

e.g.

1. Hear someone talk about it, then you ask questions. (auditory)
2. See a slide show, read a book or look at a list of bulleted information. (visual)
3. Sit down, pull the information around you and get a feel for it either by yourself or with others. (kinesthetic)

When you walk into a room full of people what is your process (first you would do X, then you would do Y and finally you would do Z) for deciding how you want to handle yourself?

e.g.

1. Listen for a familiar voice, try to hear what is going on with the group? (auditory)
2. Look to see what expressions people are wearing, who is talking to whom. (visual)
3. Get a feel for the atmosphere in the room, decide if you want to fit in with the group, elevate to mood or leave. (kinesthetic)

or

How do you like to learn new information? e.g.

1. Hear someone talk about it, then you ask questions.
2. See a slide show, read a book or look at a list of bulleted information
3. Sit down, pull the information around you and get a feel for it either by yourself or with others.

When you know a person's preferred learning style you will know how they like to learn and how you can best communicate with them. e.g. if you are a visual learner (50% of people are) you will need to remember that an email may not be enough information for an auditory learner. They will want to talk to you about the topic. A kinesthetic learner may want to work on a project and "get a feel" for the important dynamics before they are comfortable involving, telling or showing others.

Janis Mullaney & Dona McNeill - 2001