The People First Interview Guide

plum Leadership Group

Use these questions to help you understand the person, not just assess the candidate. Listen for the patterns in their decisions beyond the polished answers.

Their Story

1

Start with the choices that shaped them:

- Tell me your life story
- What made you choose this field?
- What made you leave previous roles?
- Which job have you enjoyed the most, and why?
- What did you like best about your last role?

What brings out their best?

2

Understand what managing this person may actually look like, and what the working relationship may really require.

- Tell me about the best and worst boss you've ever had.
- What brings out the best in you?
- What are you like on a bad day?
- What tends to frustrate you at work?
- How do you like to receive feedback?
- What would make you leave a role?

The Honest Fit Conversation

3

Create room for honesty instead of performance.

- Where does this role rank from 1-10 if 10 is your dream job?
- What would it need to become a 10?
- What are you hoping this role gives you that previous ones did not?
- What part of this opportunity are you most and least excited about?
- What might make this role the wrong fit for you?

Values in Real Life

4

Move beyond polished definitions.

- Integrity is one of our core values. How does integrity show up in real life?
- Tell me about a time it was difficult to act with integrity.
- What does integrity look like when no one is watching?
- When have you made a decision that cost you something because it was the right thing to do?

Who They Are Outside of Work

5

Look for the person, not just the résumé. Reviewing their application and LinkedIn profile can help you find an authentic point of connection.

- What do you spend time doing while not at work?
- What is something you've worked hard at outside of your career?
- What are you proud of that would never appear on your résumé?

Remember: Don't ask personal questions that could be seen as discriminatory. Learn more.

What To Listen For

6

Look for self-awareness, ownership, patterns across answers, what energizes them vs. what drains them, and whether your environment matches what they need.

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Lead better interviews. Build stronger teams.

The best interviews are genuine conversations where both people are deciding whether this is the right fit.

For more leadership guidance and 1:1 coaching, visit plumleadershipgroup.com

Disclaimer: This checklist is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Always consult a qualified employment attorney in your area regarding hiring, interviewing, employment agreements, and personnel decisions.