

THE ULTIMATE INTERVIEW GUIDE



**BEHAVIOURAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
TO HELP YOU HIRE BETTER PEOPLE**



© 2026 SIGNATURE STAFF PTY LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



“

**HIRING THE
RIGHT PERSON
CAN BE ONE OF
THE MOST
IMPORTANT
DECISIONS YOU
MAKE FOR YOUR
BUSINESS.**



”

WELCOME FROM SIGNATURE STAFF

This guide has been created to help business owners, hiring managers, and supervisors ask better interview questions, identify stronger candidates, and make more informed hiring decisions.

whether you are hiring your first employee or building a large team, these questions will help you uncover how candidates have performed in real workplace situations.





TABLE OF CONTENT

1. WHY INTERVIEWS FAIL
2. INTERVIEW PLANNING CHECKLIST
3. HOW TO CONDUCT AN EFFECTIVE INTERVIEW
4. THE STAR METHOD
5. INTERVIEW RATING SCALE
6. QUESTION SECTIONS
 - CUSTOMER SERVICE
 - TEAMWORK
 - COMMUNICATION
 - PROBLEM SOLVING
 - ACCOUNTABILITY
 - TIME MANAGEMENT & ORGANISATION
 - ADAPTABILITY & CHANGE
 - INITIATIVE
 - QUESTIONS THAT REVEAL CHARACTER
 - QUESTIONS TO AVOID
7. INTERVIEW SCORECARD
8. BONUS: INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDES BY ROLE
 - ADMINISTRATION & OFFICE SUPPORT
 - CUSTOMER SERVICE
 - SALES
 - RETAIL
 - HOSPITALITY
9. ABOUT SIGNATURE STAFF

WHY INTERVIEWS FAIL



Unfortunately, these factors are often poor predictors of future performance. The most effective interviews are structured, consistent, and focused on evidence rather than assumptions.

This guide has been designed to help you ask better questions and make more informed hiring decisions.

INTERVIEW PLANNING CHECKLIST

BEFORE CONDUCTING ANY INTERVIEW:

1.

REVIEW THE
CANDIDATE'S
RESUME

2.

IDENTIFY THE KEY
SKILLS REQUIRED
FOR THE ROLE

3.

SELECT 8-12
QUESTIONS FROM THE
RELEVANT SECTIONS

4.

PREPARE ANY
ROLE-SPECIFIC
QUESTIONS

5.

DETERMINE WHO WILL
BE CONDUCTING THE
INTERVIEW

6.

ALLOCATE
SUFFICIENT
TIME

7.

PREPARE YOUR
INTERVIEW
SCORECARD

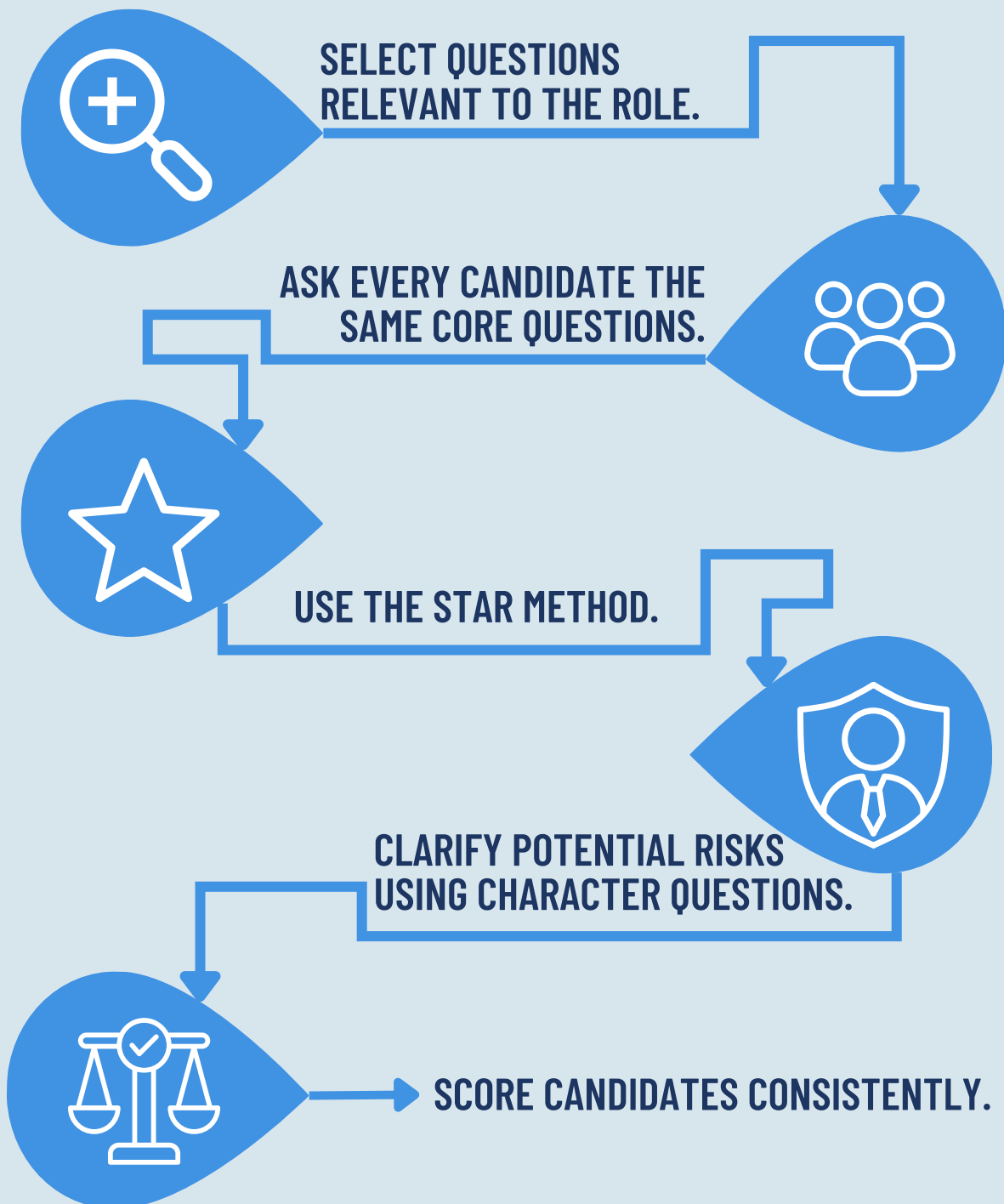
8.

ASK ALL CANDIDATES
THE SAME CORE
QUESTIONS

9.

SELECT 1-3
CHARACTER
QUESTIONS TO
USE AT THE END

HOW TO CONDUCT AN EFFECTIVE INTERVIEW



THE START METHOD

S

SITUATION

What was happening?

T

TASK

What responsibility did you have?

A

ACTION

What did you personally do?

R

RESULT

What was the outcome?

INTERVIEW TIP:

IF ANSWERS ARE VAGUE, CONTINUE PROBING UNTIL YOU UNDERSTAND THE CANDIDATE'S SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION.

INTERVIEW RATING SCALE

SCORE

RATING

DESCRIPTION

1

NOT SUITABLE

Does not demonstrate the required skills, experience, behaviours, or competencies for the role. Significant concerns identified.

2

**BELOW
EXPECTATIONS**

Demonstrates some relevant skills or experience but falls short of the requirements in several key areas. Additional development would be required.

3

**MEETS
EXPECTATIONS**

Demonstrates the skills, experience, and behaviours required to perform the role effectively. Suitable candidate.

4

**EXCEEDS
EXPECTATIONS**

Demonstrates strong skills, experience, and behaviours that exceed the requirements of the role. Likely to add significant value.

5

OUTSTANDING

Demonstrates exceptional skills, experience, achievements, and behaviours. A standout candidate with strong potential for high performance.

QUESTION SECTIONS

CUSTOMER SERVICE



Why Ask Customer Service Questions?

Customer service skills are critical in almost every role. These questions help you assess how candidates communicate, resolve issues, manage expectations, and build relationships with customers, clients, or internal stakeholders.

Questions

1. Tell me about a time you dealt with a difficult customer.
2. Describe a customer complaint you personally resolved.
3. Tell me about a time you exceeded a customer's expectations.
4. Give an example of when you had to say no to a customer.
5. Tell me about a customer who was unhappy with your service.
6. Describe a time when you turned a negative customer experience into a positive one.
7. Tell me about a time you received positive feedback from a customer.
8. Give an example of when you identified a customer's needs before they asked.
9. Tell me about a time when you had multiple customers requiring assistance at once.
10. Describe the best customer service you have ever provided.

QUESTION SECTIONS

TEAMWORK



Why Ask Teamwork Questions?

Most roles require employees to work effectively with others. These questions help determine how candidates collaborate, support colleagues, handle disagreements, and contribute to team success.

Questions

1. Tell me about a time you worked with a difficult team member.
2. Describe a time when you helped a colleague who was struggling.
3. Tell me about a disagreement you had with a co-worker.
4. Give an example of a successful team project you worked on.
5. Tell me about a time when a team member was not contributing.
6. Describe a situation where you put the team's goals ahead of your own.
7. Tell me about a time you received constructive feedback from a colleague.
8. Give an example of how you built strong relationships within a team.
9. Tell me about a time you worked with people from different backgrounds.
10. Describe the best team you have worked with and why.

QUESTION SECTIONS COMMUNICATION



Why Ask Communication Questions?

Strong communication helps prevent misunderstandings, improve productivity, and build stronger workplace relationships. These questions explore how candidates communicate in different situations.

Questions

1. Tell me about a time you had to explain something complicated.
2. Describe a misunderstanding you helped resolve.
3. Tell me about a difficult conversation you had at work.
4. Give an example of when you had to deliver bad news.
5. Tell me about a time you persuaded someone to see your point of view.
6. Describe a time you had to communicate with multiple stakeholders.
7. Tell me about a time your communication prevented a problem.
8. Give an example of when you adapted your communication style.
9. Tell me about a presentation you delivered.
10. Describe a time communication did not go as planned.

QUESTION SECTIONS



PROBLEM SOLVING

Why Ask Problem Solving Questions?

Every workplace encounters challenges. These questions help identify candidates who can think critically, solve problems effectively, and make sound decisions.

Questions

1. Tell me about the most difficult problem you have solved.
2. Describe a situation where something went wrong unexpectedly.
3. Tell me about a decision you made with limited information.
4. Give an example of a recurring problem you fixed.
5. Tell me about a time you identified a problem before others noticed.
6. Describe a time your first solution did not work.
7. Tell me about a time you had to think quickly.
8. Give an example of when you improved a process.
9. Tell me about a difficult decision you made.
10. Describe a problem that required creativity to solve.

QUESTION SECTIONS

ACCOUNTABILITY



Why Ask Accountability Questions?

Great employees take responsibility for their actions, learn from mistakes, and follow through on commitments. These questions help assess ownership and personal responsibility.

Questions

1. Tell me about a mistake you made at work.
2. Describe a time you missed a deadline.
3. Tell me about a commitment that was difficult to keep.
4. Give an example of when you accepted responsibility for a problem.
5. Tell me about a time you admitted you were wrong.
6. Describe a time you were held accountable for poor results.
7. Tell me about a situation where you owned a problem from start to finish.
8. Give an example of when you learned from a mistake.
9. Tell me about a time you corrected an error before it became bigger.
10. Describe a situation where accountability improved an outcome.

QUESTION SECTIONS



TIME MANAGEMENT & ORGANISATION

Why Ask Time Management Questions?

Time management skills are essential for meeting deadlines, prioritising tasks, and maintaining productivity in a busy work environment.

Questions

1. Tell me about a time you had too much work to complete.
2. Describe how you prioritised competing tasks.
3. Tell me about a time you managed multiple deadlines.
4. Give an example of a project that required strong organisation.
5. Tell me about a time you missed a deadline.
6. Describe how you plan your workday.
7. Tell me about a time priorities changed unexpectedly.
8. Give an example of how you stay organised.
9. Tell me about a time you improved your efficiency.
10. Describe your most organised project.

QUESTION SECTIONS

ADAPTABILITY & CHANGE



Why Ask Adaptability Questions?

Workplaces are constantly changing. These questions help assess how candidates respond to new situations, changing priorities, and unexpected challenges.

Questions

1. Tell me about a major change at work.
2. Describe a time you had to learn a new skill quickly.
3. Tell me about a time you worked outside your comfort zone.
4. Give an example of adapting to a new manager.
5. Tell me about a time workplace priorities changed suddenly.
6. Describe a time you embraced change.
7. Tell me about a time you resisted change and what happened.
8. Give an example of flexibility helping you succeed.
9. Tell me about a major workplace transition.
10. Describe a situation where you had to change your approach.

QUESTION SECTIONS

INITIATIVE



Why Ask Initiative Questions?

Employers value people who can identify opportunities, solve problems proactively, and take ownership without always waiting for direction.

Questions

1. Tell me about a problem you solved before being asked.
2. Describe an improvement you introduced.
3. Tell me about a time you took ownership of a situation.
4. Give an example of identifying an opportunity others missed.
5. Tell me about a project you started yourself.
6. Describe a time you went above and beyond.
7. Tell me about a time you volunteered for extra responsibility.
8. Give an example of proactive thinking.
9. Tell me about a process you improved.
10. Describe a time your initiative produced results.

QUESTIONS THAT REVEAL CHARACTER

Select 1-3 questions from this section towards the end of the interview to clarify any concerns, inconsistencies, behaviours, or potential risks identified during the interview.

Examples:

- Tell me about a time you disagreed with your manager.
- Tell me about the biggest mistake you've made at work.
- What is the most difficult feedback you've ever received?
- Tell me about a time you failed to achieve a goal.
- Tell me about a time you let someone down.
- Tell me about a time you were tempted to take a shortcut.

What Strong Answers Often Demonstrate

- Accountability
- Self-awareness
- Integrity
- Emotional maturity
- Learning from mistakes

Be Cautious Of Candidates Who

- Blame others for every problem
- Claim they have never failed
- Avoid taking responsibility
- Become defensive
- Cannot identify areas for improvement

QUESTIONS TO AVOID

Employers should avoid questions relating to:

- Age
- Religion
- Marital Status
- Pregnancy
- Family Planning
- Political Beliefs
- Sexual Orientation
- Race or Ethnicity
- Medical History not relevant to the role

**ALWAYS FOCUS ON THE CANDIDATE'S
ABILITY TO PERFORM THE INHERENT
REQUIREMENTS OF THE POSITION.**

Interview Scorecard

Candidate Name: _____

Position: _____

Interview Date: _____

Communication Skills _____ / 5

Technical Skills _____ / 5

Problem Solving _____ / 5

Teamwork _____ / 5

Customer Service _____ / 5

Reliability _____ / 5

Adaptability _____ / 5

Leadership Potential _____ / 5

Cultural Fit _____ / 5

Overall Suitability _____ / 5

Recommendation:

- ☐ Strongly Recommend
- ☐ Recommend
- ☐ Proceed with Caution
- ☐ Do Not Recommend



BONUS: INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDES BY ROLE

ADMINISTRATION & OFFICE SUPPORT

CUSTOMER SERVICE

SALES

RETAIL

HOSPITALITY

ADMINISTRATION & OFFICE SUPPORT

Key Areas Assessed

- Organisation
- Time Management
- Communication
- Attention to Detail
- Customer Service



Recommended Interview Questions

- Tell me about a time you had multiple competing deadlines and how you managed them.
- Describe a situation where your attention to detail prevented a mistake.
- Tell me about a difficult phone call or customer enquiry you handled.
- Give an example of how you organise your workload and priorities.
- Tell me about a time you improved an administrative process.
- Describe a situation where you had to manage confidential information.
- Tell me about a time you supported multiple people within a business.
- Give an example of when you had to learn a new system or software quickly.
- Tell me about a mistake you made and how you corrected it.
- What is the most complex administrative task you have managed?

“Tell me about the biggest mistake you've made at work and what you learned from it.”

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Key Areas Assessed

- Customer Focus
- Problem Solving
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Conflict Resolution



Recommended Interview Questions

- Tell me about a time you dealt with a difficult customer.
- Describe a customer complaint you successfully resolved.
- Tell me about a time you exceeded a customer's expectations.
- Give an example of when you had to say no to a customer.
- Tell me about a customer interaction that you are particularly proud of.
- Describe a time you had multiple customers requiring assistance at once.
- Tell me about a time you worked with a difficult colleague while serving customers.
- Give an example of when you remained calm under pressure.
- Tell me about a mistake you made while dealing with a customer and how you handled it.
- What does exceptional customer service mean to you?

“Tell me about a customer complaint that did not go as well as you would have liked. What would you do differently now?”

SALES

Key Areas Assessed

- Relationship Building
- Resilience
- Results Focus
- Communication
- Negotiation



Recommended Interview Questions

- Tell me about your biggest sales achievement.
- Describe a sale that took longer than expected to close.
- Tell me about a time you exceeded your sales targets.
- Give an example of how you build rapport with new prospects.
- Tell me about a difficult objection you successfully overcame.
- Describe a time you lost a sale. What did you learn?
- Tell me about a client relationship you are most proud of.
- Give an example of when persistence helped you win business.
- Tell me about a time you generated business through networking or referrals.
- What sales achievement are you most proud of and why?

"Tell me about a sales target you failed to achieve. What happened and what did you learn?"

RETAIL

Key Areas Assessed

- Customer Service
- Teamwork
- Working Under Pressure
- Sales Ability
- Reliability



Recommended Interview Questions

- Tell me about a time you provided exceptional customer service.
- Describe a situation where you successfully upsold or recommended additional products.
- Tell me about a difficult customer you dealt with in a retail environment.
- Give an example of a time you worked during a particularly busy period.
- Tell me about a time you worked as part of a team to achieve a goal.
- Describe a situation where you noticed a problem on the shop floor and took action.
- Tell me about a time you handled a customer complaint.
- Give an example of when you had to balance customer service with other responsibilities.
- Tell me about a time you had to learn a new product range quickly.
- What do you believe makes a great retail team member?

“Tell me about a time you made a mistake that impacted a customer. How did you handle it?”

HOSPITALITY

Key Areas Assessed

- Customer Service
- Communication
- Reliability
- Teamwork
- Working Under Pressure



Recommended Interview Questions

- Tell me about a time you provided outstanding service to a guest or customer.
- Describe a particularly busy shift and how you managed it.
- Tell me about a difficult customer or guest you had to deal with.
- Give an example of a time teamwork helped you get through a busy service period.
- Tell me about a time you had to think quickly to solve a problem.
- Describe a situation where you had multiple competing priorities.
- Tell me about a time you received positive feedback from a guest or customer.
- Give an example of when you helped a teammate during a busy shift.
- Tell me about a mistake you made during service and how you resolved it.
- What does great hospitality mean to you?

“Tell me about the most challenging shift you've ever worked. What happened and what did you learn from the experience?”

INTERVIEW

TIP

For most roles, select 8–10 core questions from the relevant interview guide and ask all candidates the same questions.

Towards the end of the interview, select 1–3 character questions to clarify any concerns, behaviours, inconsistencies, or potential risks identified during the interview.

This approach helps ensure a fair, consistent, and objective interview process while providing deeper insight into the candidate's suitability for the role.

ABOUT SIGNATURE STAFF



Signature Staff specialises in temporary staffing, labour hire, and permanent recruitment solutions across Australia.

We help businesses find quality people while reducing hiring risk and saving valuable time.

Services:

- Temporary Staffing
- Labour Hire
- Permanent Recruitment
- Workforce Solutions
- Executive Search
- Recruitment Consulting

NEED HELP FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE?

Finding great employees takes time.

Whether you need temporary staff, labour hire, permanent recruitment, or workforce solutions, Signature Staff can help.

Contact our team today.

Phone:

+61 7 4050 3888

Email:

info@signaturestaff.com.au

Website:

www.signaturestaff.com.au

© 2026 Signature Staff Pty Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

This publication is provided for informational purposes only. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, modified, published, transmitted, or used for commercial purposes without prior written permission from Signature Staff Pty Ltd.

Businesses may download and use this guide internally for recruitment and hiring purposes.

The information contained in this guide does not constitute legal, employment, or human resources advice. Employers should seek professional advice regarding compliance with applicable employment, discrimination, and workplace laws.

© 2026 Signature Staff Pty Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

Footer For Every Page

© 2026 Signature Staff Pty Ltd

www.signaturestaff.com.au

