

Interviewing Your Next Hire:
A Conversation Or An
Interrogation?



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THE CRUX OF INTERVIEWS



At job interviews, particularly when young people are involved, the candidate is frequently asked:

"What is your greatest weakness?"

This is a rude, intrusive question, and nobody should be required to answer it. It is a trick question designed to put the applicant at a disadvantage.

Friends familiar with the dark, insidious and cruel world of human resources assure me that such questions are ubiquitous, part of the interviewer's script.



Another dandy is,

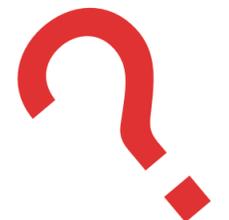
"Where do you see yourself in 10 years?"

Who asks a person just starting out in life a question like that? Or, even worse, a person reaching the end of his career?



"Where do you see yourself in 10 years?" an Egyptian HR firm might have asked the young Moses shortly before he parted the Red Sea. "Wandering around the desert, I guess" would be the response.

Or, as Jean Valjean of "Les Misérables" might put it: **"Ten years from now?"** Probably getting ready to serve the last nine years of my sentence. I'm doing the big dix-neuf."



MURKY GROUNDS, SHALLOW WATERS

So, without further ado, here are the set of six questions you should not be asking your candidates during a job interview?

WHY ARE YOU LEAVING YOUR CURRENT JOB?



This question could lead to an awkward answer that doesn't cast the candidate in their best light. The answer could be highly personal, and it isn't that helpful for learning more about the candidate.

INSTEAD, ask them about their favorite part and biggest challenge of their current role.

You'll learn more about their priorities, deal breakers, and culture fit -- without the conversation becoming too negative.

WHAT'S THE PROJECT YOU'RE MOST PROUD OF?

It's useful to learn what projects a candidate enjoys working on most, but you could take this question further by asking something broader.

INSTEAD, ask them to talk about how they produced a piece of work with multiple different teams.

The answer will reveal how they work dynamically and as a project manager -- useful traits for most marketing and sales teams.





WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST WEAKNESS?

It would be presumptuous of you to assume that you understand what a candidate's perceived weaknesses are. The answer could exclude candidates from other cultures or industries who aren't familiar with yours, and it puts candidates in a negative state of mind.

INSTEAD, ask them to describe a challenge they faced in a role and how they handled it.

The answer will teach you more about their problem-solving skills, without putting them in the awkward position of personal self-reflection.

“*What have you learned from your mistakes?*
"For best results, stay out of Russia, especially in December."
(Napoleon Bonaparte)

ARE YOU A TEAM PLAYER?

When it comes to this question, the answer is valuable, but a candidate is unlikely to self-identify as an individual worker. Likewise, your company probably doesn't have any roles that are completely solitary -- everyone must attend meetings or work on campaigns at some point.



INSTEAD, ask the candidate what their ideal team dynamic is.

You'll get the same answer you're looking for -- if they work well with others -- while allowing them to elaborate on their preferred working environment.

“ Why should we hire you instead of the other highly qualified candidate?
“I don't think my brother's going to make it to the interview today.”
(Cain)

HOW MANY PEOPLE DO YOU THINK FLEW OUT OF JFK AIRPORT LAST YEAR?

Brain teasers might be entertaining to ask (thank you Google!) -- and they might teach you a thing or two about a candidate's problem-solving abilities -- but brain teasing questions like this one create too much stress for the candidate. They're usually ridiculously hard to solve and put the candidate on the spot -- without revealing a ton of helpful information.

INSTEAD, ask the candidate how they'd solve a problem that's common on your team.

The answer will be more useful, and it won't take the candidate by surprise.

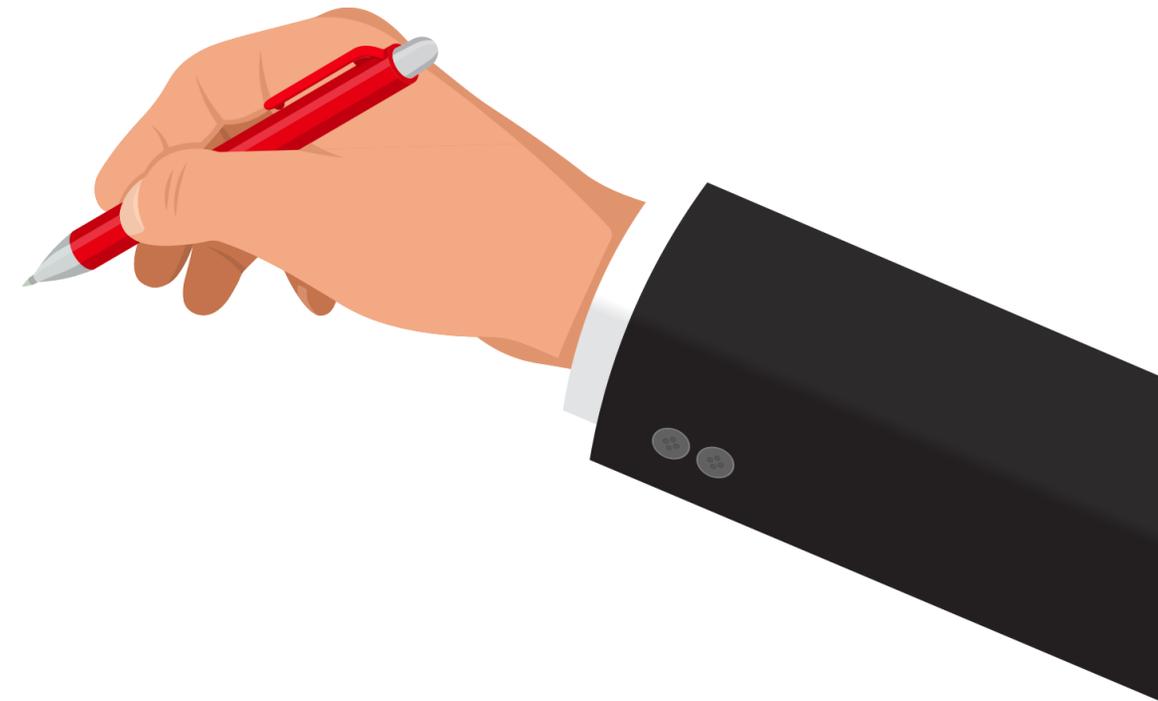


SELL ME THIS PEN.

If you're hiring for a sales role, you should know: "Sell me this pen" has become such a frequently-asked question, it can be easily answered in a quick Google search before the interview. It might not give you the candidate's true selling abilities -- something you need to know before investing time and resources in training them.

INSTEAD, ask them how they would handle a common roadblock your sales team faces.

The answer will prove if they've done their research, and it will give you an idea of their persuasion skills if they were on a call.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT – HOW DO YOU KNOW MORE ABOUT YOUR NEW HIRE?

Now you might be wondering about how you can know more about the candidate if interviews do not suffice. Well, they can do wonders **when you have a better conversation starter than a resume**, and know which questions to ask.

We have a **case study** to help you with that dilemma right here.

It's around a telecom company headquartered in London with a global footprint across 150+ countries. Established in the 1980s, the organization provides telecommunication and IT services to several well-known corporate clients across the world, amassing a customer base 400 million strong. We knew the project was nothing to scoff at.



HOW FILTERING POSED A MAJOR CHALLENGE TO THEM

Anyone in the business world ought to be aware of what a sales manager brings to the table. They're a large part of what drives sales in an organization, and a bad hire could translate to a horrendous loss in business opportunities. Our client here sought suitable applicants to fill these positions.

But by itself, the organization faced three key challenges:



A Smart Résumé Filter

It required a union of complex demographic data about the job with the elimination of logistical nightmares around manual sorting.

HOW FILTERING POSED A MAJOR CHALLENGE TO THEM



Identification of Critical Competencies

Competencies are often of two kinds – technical, skills required for powerful on-job performance, and behavioral, a combination of personality and behavioral traits that affect powerful on-job performance.



Analytics Around Performance Metrics

The telecommunication firm required hard analytics around various demographics and work factors to make their decision-making process easier.

Generic filters often errored out when it came to resumés, filtering more candidates than required or none at all. The ideal solution entailed robustness, translating complex requirements in choosing potentially powerful hires.

HOW OUR SOLUTION WORKED IN THEIR FAVOR

We started by building a competency blueprint of prospective hires by administering pre-built assessments on existing employees. This laid foundation to the ideal employee persona. The following components encompassed the creation of the persona:



1. Mettl Personality Profiler (MPP)

MPP is a powerful filtration tool, but its results could also translate to critical HR decisions such as promotion, high potential identification, and the T&D needs of individual employees among others. The tool measures 26 personality traits, and a combination of these characteristics provide inputs on an individual's performance on various competencies.

HOW OUR SOLUTION WORKED IN THEIR FAVOR

2. Customer Focus Test

This tool urges employees or candidates to solve problems via a route of innovation. It measures customer orientation and client centric personality traits through 11 competencies. The test also serves to identify red flags, if any, in a person to identify employee or candidate specific training needs.

3. Mettl Critical Thinking Test

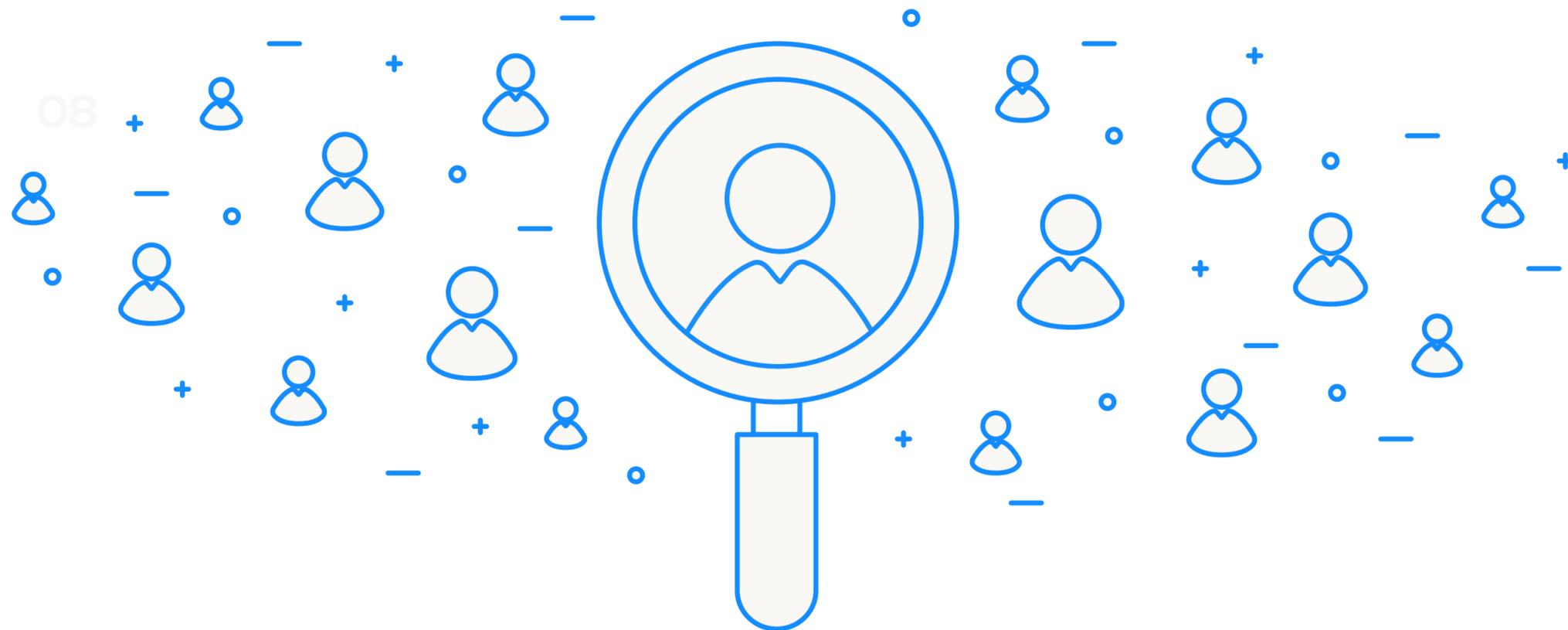
It's designed to assess candidates on recognition of assumptions, evaluation of arguments, and methodologies behind conclusions, which translates to abilities in deduction, inference and interpretation.



HOW OUR SOLUTION WORKED IN THEIR FAVOR

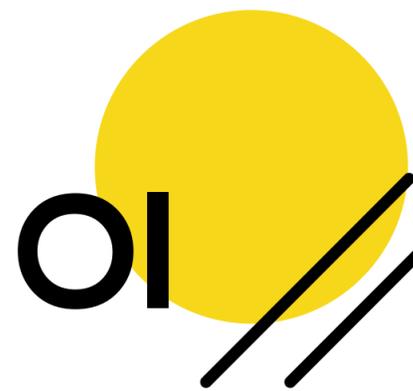
After studying the responses of all existing employees across a versatile demographic, the company established logic and correlation to be used on all future potential employees.

This helped them figure out if they were good hires for the company.



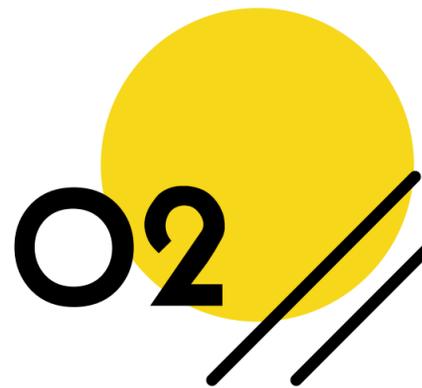
HOW OUR SOLUTION IMPACTED PROCESSES

In time, the solution answered the ROI query in and of itself. Some of the visible changes noticed were:



Identification of Potential Top Performers

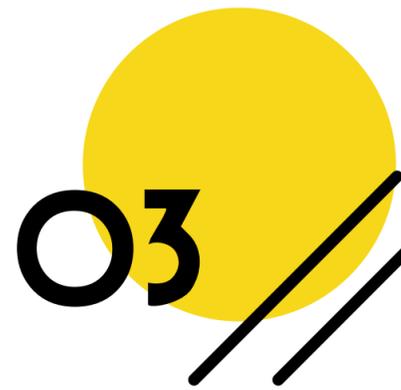
High assessment scores correlated to impactful on-job performance by an *astounding 70%*. It helped identify candidates with the potential to succeed in said company environment, both in terms of culture and skill.



Faster, More Efficient Resumé Filtration

The smart filter eliminated all logistical hassles involved with manual sorting. It transpired to an increase in speed and efficiency for the HR team also, allowing them to focus on candidates better suited for the job.

HOW OUR SOLUTION IMPACTED PROCESSES



Demographic Analysis Report of Fresh Hires

The diagnostic performance report covered different demographic data points along with work factors such as markets, industry types, hiring channels, work experience, and average tenure. It enabled the telecommunications firm to study the performance trend within their employees across different factors.

HOW OUR SOLUTION IMPACTED PROCESSES

In conclusion, pre-hiring assessments which include psychometric, cognitive (aptitude) and skill tests reveal insights into every candidate's learning agility, cultural fitment, strengths and weaknesses. A comprehensive analysis to your candidate's core skills will help you identify how you want the interview to proceed.

SO HOW WOULD YOU LIKE IT TO BE?

A conversation, or an interrogation?





What is Mettl?

Mettl is a SaaS based assessment platform that enables organizations to create customized assessments for use across the entire employee lifecycle, beginning with pre-hiring screening and candidate skills assessment, training and development programs for employees/students, certification exams, contests and more.

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+91-9555114444



contact@mettl.com



Plot 85, Sector 44, Gurgaon,
Haryana, India - 122003