
Scenarios for Technical Candidates

Start with attributes you want in your technical staff. Just as importantly, think of the attributes you DON'T want them to have.

Pose specific, job-related scenarios that will uncover the habits and practices of these candidates, and see how they illuminate what you DO and DON'T want:

1. **How do you troubleshoot an intermittent problem?**
 - a. **You want:** a defined system & plan of action. This plan should have specific, repeatable steps that have structure. You want someone who applies appropriate attention to the severity of the problem. i.e., they only invest major time & attention to major problems.
 - b. **You don't want:**
 - i. A person who appears to be "winging it"
 - ii. A perfectionist who spends massive time on insignificant problems
 - iii. A person who cannot prioritize well
2. **A customer asks you to do some work that is outside the scope of work. How do you handle?**
 - a. **You want:** A person with good customer service skills. Someone who will be happy to do the additional work, but only when the customer agrees to the additional work order.
 - b. **You don't want:**
 - i. A person who will do the work without getting additional payment
 - ii. A person who has a rigid "sorry, it's not my job" attitude
3. **A Salesperson asks you to accompany them on a Sales Call. How do you determine if it's qualified and worth your time?**
 - a. **You want:** a person who wants to help the sales team, but doesn't want to waste time and money on wild goose chases. A person who can ask the right questions without causing offense and creating friction .
 - b. **You don't want:**
 - i. Someone who goes on every sales call, no matter how poor the opportunity is
 - ii. Someone who is abrasive and disparaging to the salespeople
4. **A customer continues to call you directly on your cell phone for support issues. This means the call doesn't get logged and tracked in your Customer Service system.**
 - a. **You want:** a person who can diplomatically direct the customer back to the proper call channels without causing offense..
 - b. **You don't want:**
 - i. A person who ENCOURAGES customers to call him or her directly
 - ii. A person who handles the call without running it through your PSA program
5. **A customer finds fault with every facet of your implementation. How do you deal with this?**
 - a. **You want:** Diplomacy and customer service skills.

-
- b. **You don't want:**
 - i. Someone with a bad temper
 - ii. A person who rolls over and accepts every criticism without response
6. **You know of a fix for a nagging customer problem, but it's not supported by the manufacturer. Do you implement it anyway?**
- a. **You want:** a person who understands the risks and rewards of unsupported applications. Sometimes these technical tricks and workarounds make life immeasurably better for your customer. More often, they become sinkholes of time and support.
 - b. **You don't want:**
 - i. A tech who is eager to "write a bit of patch code"
 - ii. A person who downplays the risks of implementing unsupported applications
 - iii. Someone who thinks they know more than you and the manufacturer
7. **The sales department has become extremely irritating to you. They make promises they can't keep. They want massive work done at the last minute. They borrow gear and don't return it. How do you deal with this?**
- a. **You want:** a person who has some tolerance for personal foibles in others, but also stands up for doing business the right way.
 - b. **You don't want:**
 - i. A person who hates other departments
 - ii. Someone who is easily annoyed

Simplest Questions are Best – Read the script questions exactly, or develop your own using precise wording. No need to elaborate, explain, justify, or in any way tip off the candidate what you are looking for.

You Will Quickly Learn the questions and answers, and as you speak to more candidates, you will get a good feel for the bad – medium – and great answers. You will never forget the great answers.

Nothing peels the veneer off a candidate like a tough Behavioral Interview. Don't just take the initial answer at face value, probe and drill down on their answers. When they are vague and general, push them to be more specific. Challenge them on their answers. Ask them to clarify and give examples.

The Questions are 50% of the Value. The Feedback you give is another 50%

Once you have completed the scenarios and questions, it's time for you to give the candidate feedback on their answers. Many candidates never get this kind of feedback on their interviews, and this is a real differentiator for you.

As you listen to the candidate answers, make a "T" on your note page, and put all the positives you see on the left and the negatives on the right. Look especially hard for positives. You will have no trouble finding many negatives. You will always hear a few answers that are particularly good or bad. Put a star next to 3-4 you want to talk about in more detail during the feedback session.

Move to 2-3 areas of concern you want to discuss. Always make the ratio at least 3-1 positive to negative. Indicate you have a problem with the answer, not the person. "I've found that top salespeople answer that question differently". "Here's how you can answer that more effectively".

At the end, you ask "what do you think?".