

Simplification Tool

Interview

Questions for

Hiring Simplifiers



Simplification Process:

- 1 – Awareness
- 2 – Identification
- 3 – Prioritization
- 4 – Execution
- 5 – Habit Formation

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WHY THIS TOOL?

The potential for simplification in your company increases when employees at all levels demonstrate the capacity for simplification. Whether your organization has embraced a simplification program or is taking first steps toward one, this tool is a litmus test for identifying simplifiers among your hiring pool. Is it possible to recognize a simplifier during a first interview? Absolutely—when you’re armed with these 30+ questions.

HOW IT WORKS

SUGGESTED AUDIENCE: • Relevant for managers + leaders who hire talent

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|-----------------|
| RECOMMENDED TIMING: | Step 1. Choose 10-15 relevant hiring questions: | 30 mins. |
| | Step 2. Incorporate questions into hiring process: | 45 mins. |
| | | 75 mins. |

SUGGESTED MATERIALS:



Worksheets
(printed in advance of interview)



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STEP 1: CHOOSE 10-15 RELEVANT HIRING QUESTIONS

Review all 34 questions and check the box beside the questions that specifically address behaviors that you want to encourage in your business. If empowering employees to challenge complexity is a goal, choose an EXECUTION question like “When you experience resistance to your simplification efforts, how do you respond?” If you need employees who recognize and eradicate complexity in their daily work, choose an IDENTIFICATION question like “What would make it easier for you to do your current or previous job?” Feel free to add custom questions in the blank spaces provided.

AWARENESS

Can you name an individual who has successfully simplified a complex business or industry?

Which company or individual is the portrait of simplicity? What about complexity?

In your opinion, what are the major causes of organizational complexity?

How do you know if you're working in a simplicity-centric organization?

What are the characteristics of a simplicity-focused organization?

IDENTIFICATION

Can you name a few red-flag indicators of complexity?

If you were put in charge of our simplification efforts, where would you start?

In your opinion, where does complexity typically live in an organization? Why?

Can you name a situation in which you encountered excessive complexity and nobody else recognized it?

What gets in the way of accomplishing your workplace goals?

What is the most basic issue that interferes with your job performance?

What would make it easier to do your current or previous job?

In the last month, were you asked to do any work that proved to be a total waste of time? What do you wish you would've done or said to avoid it?



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- If your colleague is performing a task that doesn't add value to the business, do you speak up? Why or why not?
- Can you remember a situation where it was evident that your team or organization had a complexity problem? How did you resolve it?

What sorts of reasons do people use as an excuse for not simplifying things that are unnecessarily complicated?

PRIORITIZATION

If you could do 1 thing at your previous or current company to instantly simplify your work, what would it be?

What 2 time-suck tasks would you eradicate from your previous or current job? Why these tasks?

Can you share an example when you were frustrated by a company that made things purposefully complicated?

We're redesigning our company's website to reflect a simplified approach. Which current elements would you eliminate to achieve this?

In 140 characters or less, what would you tweet to persuade us that you're a simplifier who should be offered this job?

EXECUTION

Can you share an example of a successful workaround you created to simplify a frustrating process or system? Was it adopted as the new protocol?

When you encounter an individual who makes things needlessly complex, how do you respond?

How would you measure simplicity in an organization?

What circumstances are optimal for achieving simplicity?

Would you rather construct a new, simple product/service from scratch or simplify a current product/service that's plagued with complexity?



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- Can you share a situation—either in your personal or professional life—where you were utterly overwhelmed by complexity and found a way to simplify things?
- In your opinion, what prevents people with unnecessarily complicated schedules from simplifying and freeing up their time?
- When you experience resistance to your simplification efforts, how do you respond?
- From the existing job description for this role, which 3 objectives should we cut and why?
- _____

HABIT FORMATION

- In your opinion, what individual behaviors contribute to simplification?
- What are the managerial habits or behaviors that contribute to complexity? How could these be modified?
- When you encounter an inefficient policy or process, do you offer to find a better solution?
- If hired, what are a few ways you might make simplification a habit within your group?
- _____

STEP 2: INCORPORATE QUESTIONS INTO HIRING PROCESS

During interviews, look for examples of the candidates' approach to simplification in their answers. True simplifiers can easily and passionately explain their philosophy, and share stories about a process or task that they proudly streamlined or eliminated. They're honest about the resistance they faced along the way, and can offer detailed, firsthand accounts of their experience.

Conversely, beware of candidates who generalize or toss around business jargon in lieu of specifics. If you hear language about "minimizing bureaucracy" or "getting rid of red tape" without personal examples, you're likely interviewing a status-quo complexifier. If the only anecdotes they can share are business news stories or second-hand descriptions of simplicity in action, that's also a red flag.

By utilizing the hiring questions in this tool—and hopefully adding a few of your own—you'll increase the chance of hiring your next simplifier, instead of another complexifier.