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AccuVision™ OFFICE SUCCESS SKILLS SYSTEM

From AlignMark

Interview Guide

For
John Doe
111-11-1111

Date:
03-18-1999

Interviewer's Name: _____

Summary comments/recommendations from interview:

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ORGANIZATIONALLY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

In the space below, list any additional interview questions to be asked. These should include any questions needed to clarify information from the participant's resume/application, as well as questions specific to the position/organization. (Use the back of this page or insert additional pages if necessary.)

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SUGGESTIONS FOR CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

Before the session begins...

- Take the steps necessary to ensure that the session will not be interrupted. The participant should receive your undivided attention.
- Review the participant's application/resume to identify any background information that needs to be explored or clarified. List questions for these items, as well as any additional questions you intend to ask, on the sheet titled "ORGANIZATIONALLY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS."

Starting the session...

- Attempt to establish rapport and put the participant at ease.
- Explain the general purpose and format of the interview.
- Ask for and respond to any questions the participant may have.

Conducting the interview...

- Ask the interview questions and take notes on the participant's responses.

Closing the session...

- Indicate that all interview questions have been covered.
- Explain any relevant follow-up activities.
- Ask for and respond to any questions the participant may have.
- Thank the participant and close the session.

After the session...

- Evaluate the Organizationally Specific Questions and the AccuVision interview questions (including the oral and interpersonal areas). The following rating scale can be used for making these evaluations.

3 - More than acceptable
2 - Acceptable
1 - Less than acceptable

- Summarize the results of the interview in the space provided on the cover page.

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1: This job position requires an individual to deal effectively with a variety of individuals who have very different personalities and temperaments. What experiences do you have that demonstrate your skill in dealing with different types of people?

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Providing work, civic, or community-related examples of activities that reflect an ability to deal with different types of people in relatively formal settings.
2. Providing prior work experience that emphasizes dealing with diversity.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR:

1. Providing no concrete examples or using examples that focus primarily on interactions with friends in social settings.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION 2: Given that your manager faces many demands and has limited time available, part of your responsibilities includes helping to facilitate his or her effectiveness and efficiency. In general, what things can you do on an ongoing basis to improve your manager's effectiveness and efficiency?

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Managing/organizing his/her activities by maintaining an event/appointment calendar.
2. Screening calls and callers.
3. Maintaining good communication channels, with the manager as well as others (e.g., peers, subordinates, etc.).

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR:

1. Failing to provide relevant facilitation activities.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION: Assume that your manager is out of the office for the next two days and that the following situation occurs. Late in the afternoon, you receive a phone call from an important customer who explains that your manager promised to provide a special report to him no later than today, but that he hasn't received it yet. He then begins to get angry and starts talking about how important the report was and how irresponsible your company has been. You know that you don't recall your manager mentioning anything about sending a report and you're fairly sure that no report has been sent. How would you respond to the customer and what actions would you now take?

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Allowing the customer to vent his frustrations in order to diffuse the situation and attempt to calm the person.
2. Apologizing for the inconvenience and showing empathy for the person's situation.
3. Questioning the customer to determine exactly what he requires.
4. Attempting to contact the manager in order to determine the facts surrounding the situation and follow-up actions that are required.
5. Telling the customer that you will call him back ASAP to provide an update on the situation.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Failing to apologize/show empathy for the customer's situation.
2. Failing to take ownership for the problem/situation (e.g., asking questions to determine what's needed, volunteering to contact the manager, etc.).
3. Failing to follow through by offering to call the customer back and update him on the situation.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION: Assume that the following situation occurs. The manager to whom your immediate superior reports comes by your desk and asks you for some cost information on a project with which your manager is involved. When you ask what cost information she needs, she says that she discussed it with your manager yesterday and that your manager told her you would pull it together and give it to her today. In reality, you know that your manager didn't mention anything about this to you, but that you can get the information together in about a half-hour. How would you respond to the person at your desk?

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Refraining from indicating that the manager failed to mention the issue to you.
2. Indicating that you have not yet completed the task, but will do so shortly.
3. Following up with your manager to clarify the exact information needed, etc.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Indicating no knowledge of the required task.
2. Directly stating your manager failed to make any mention of the task to you.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION: Assume that one of your manager's staff members comes to you and asks to see the manager. You explain that the manager is out of the office and that you don't expect him back for several hours. The staff member becomes very annoyed and explains that she had scheduled an appointment with the manager for a meeting. You look at your appointment book and see that the staff member is correct. How do you handle the situation?

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Acknowledging the inconvenience and apologizing for the mix-up.
2. Offering to reschedule the meeting once the manager returns and contacting the staff member with a new time ASAP.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Failing to respond to the staff member's feelings.
2. Simply asking the staff member to contact the manager later in the day to reschedule the meeting.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION: Assume that yesterday your manager explained that the organization is about to start selling a new product, but asked everyone to refrain from saying anything about it to anyone outside the company until the planned marketing campaign begins in one week. Today you receive a phone call from an important customer who states that your manager discussed the new product with him last week and said that he could call you to get pricing information. Your manager is not immediately available to talk with the customer because he is out on a two-day business trip. How would you handle the situation?

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Explaining to the customer that you do not have the information at this time.
2. Offering to provide the information as soon as it becomes available and informing the customer that you will call him in the near future to let him know when to expect the information.
3. Contacting your manager to explain the situation and determine what, if any, additional actions may be desirable.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Providing information about the new product or telling the customer you know nothing about a new product.
2. Simply taking a message to give the manager upon his return.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION: Assume the following situation occurs. It's mid-afternoon and you are working on several different assignments that your manager asked you to complete today. You will barely be able to complete these assignments by the end of the normal workday. On your desk you now find a note from your manager asking you to do a large amount of photocopying before the end of the day. You know that this task will take two or three hours of time and that no one else is available to help you. How would you handle the situation?

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Demonstrating a willingness to work late, if necessary, in order to complete all of the activities.
2. Reviewing the different work activities with the manager to determine their relative importance and/or reassess the need for each to be completed today.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Attempting to prioritize the activities without seeking the manager's guidance.
2. Assuming that all activities needed to be completed today without seeking the manager's guidance.
3. Demonstrating a reluctance to work late, if needed, to complete all of the work.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION: Assume that you are responsible for providing support services to three different staff members, plus the manager to whom you directly report. One of the staff members has complained to you that over the last couple of months he doesn't feel he's getting as much of your time as the other staff members and asks you to develop a plan to address the issue. After giving the issue some thought, you conclude that his complaint is somewhat justified, in that over the last two months some of the other staff members have needed more of your time than usual because of their involvement in some high priority projects. How would you deal with the situation?

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Recognizing that the issue can likely be handled in an informal manner, rather than attempting to formalize some type of work arrangement (i.e., a fixed and set number of hours per week provided to each staff member).
2. Recognizing that if any more formalized arrangement were to be made, all affected parties would need to be involved in the discussion and decisions.
3. Attempting to respond to the feelings of the staff member (i.e., he may feel slighted), by explaining that the situation is a temporary one.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Viewing the issue as a major problem that requires significant action.
2. Making decisions about changes without consulting the affected parties.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION: Often times you'll be faced with competing demands that force you to establish priorities. What factors would you consider when determining the priority of different work activities that confront you?

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Recognizing that an activity's "importance" is different from its "urgency" and that both must be considered when establishing its priority.
2. Recognizing that an activity's "importance" can be defined in a variety of ways (e.g., operational considerations, political considerations, etc.).
3. Recognizing that establishing priorities involves a relative comparison of competing demands.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Demonstrating an inability to identify meaningful factors for determining the relative priority of competing work demands.
2. Viewing all demands as equally important.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION: Assume that your manager has asked you to set up hotel accommodations for a two-day meeting she will be conducting with a group of 15 out-of-town managers. After gathering information concerning room needs, meals, etc., how would you go about making arrangements with a local hotel to set up the meeting?

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Stressing the need to provide detailed instructions in writing to hotel personnel regarding all requirements.
2. Stressing the need to personally meet with hotel personnel to review facilities and plans prior to actual meeting date.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR:

1. Simply handling arrangements over the phone and "assuming" that arrangements will be carried out as planned.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION: Assume that you're responsible for generating a weekly activity report for your manager that summarizes the work activities completed by the staff. In order for you to prepare the report and submit it to your manager in a timely manner, each staff member must give you a list of his/her work activities each Monday morning.

Further assume that a relatively new employee has been somewhat reluctant to give you the needed information in a timely manner. When you attempted to discuss the issue with the new employee, he became defensive and said that he thought the paperwork was a waste of time and that he didn't want to be bothered with it. How would you deal with such a situation?

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Attempting to personally deal with the problem.
2. Explaining the importance and need for the report.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR:

1. Asking the manager to take care of the issue, without attempting to deal with it personally.
2. Threatening the employee by implying that the manager would become involved if compliance was not forthcoming.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION: At times you may be responsible for changing office procedures to improve work flow, etc. As you think about making changes to office procedures that have been in existence for long periods of time, what actions would you take to ensure that new procedures are accepted and followed by the rest of the staff?

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Explaining the reasons for changing a procedure to all affected.
2. Requesting input from all persons affected by the change in order to increase acceptance, identify the be possible solution, etc.
3. Monitoring the acceptance/compliance of newly implemented procedures to identify potential problems, reduce confusion or misunderstanding, etc.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR:

1. Failing to identify reasons for change in advance of implementation, which would have increased the likelihood of the new procedure being accepted by office personnel.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION: Conflicts will occasionally occur in any setting where you work closely with others. Assume that one of your co-workers is frequently late providing you with information you need to complete a regular work activity. As a result of receiving the information at the last minute, you constantly have to scramble to meet your own work deadlines. How would you deal with the situation?

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Demonstrating a willingness to personally deal with the problem.
2. Specifying problem/issue clearly (e.g., by describing how problem affects you, giving relevant examples of co-worker's problem behavior, etc.).
3. Attempting to create/maintain a constructive atmosphere during discussion by focusing on performance issues rather than "personality" differences, asking for comments/feedback instead of simply lecturing the person, etc.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Taking the problem to the manager without first attempting to deal with it personally.
2. Adopting a punitive or threatening attitude toward the co-worker.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION: Assume that the following situation has occurred. In the past, you regularly performed a certain work activity for each of the staff members in your area. However, several weeks ago your manager decided that each of the staff members would perform this activity for themselves. As you would expect, from time to time you've had to help a few of the staff members in doing this activity until they became more familiar with it. However, there is one staff member who, on a couple of occasions, has required considerable assistance and appears reluctant to learn to do the activity independently.

Now assume that this same staff member comes to you and states that he needs you to do the activity for him. He states that he has several things he needs to get done right away and he doesn't have time to take care of it himself. Assuming that you have the time available to do it for him, how would you deal with the situation?

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Offering to "help" the staff member, rather than simply doing the activity for him.
2. Offering to provide the staff member with some additional training at a later time.
3. Taking ownership for resolving what is becoming an on-going problem, rather than involving the manager.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Agreeing to the request and/or failing to turn the request into a learning experience (e.g., by offering to train him).
2. Simply assuming an "it's-not-my-job" attitude and offering no assistance.
3. Asking the manager to assist in resolving the larger scale issues with the staff member's reluctance to perform the activity.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____

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ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

No questions are asked for this area. Rather, the participant is evaluated based on behaviors observed during the overall interview session.

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Expressed comments in a concise manner.
2. Enunciated clearly.
3. Spoke in a fluid manner.
4. Looked at interviewer when speaking.
5. Used gestures to emphasize points.
6. Expressed ideas in an easy to understand manner.
7. Used proper grammar.
8. Used voice inflection to emphasize points.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Rambled on or was overly wordy.
2. Had slurred speech.
3. Was overly hesitant or choppy when speaking.
4. Failed to maintain eye contact when speaking.
5. Expressed ideas in a manner that was difficult to follow and/or understand.
6. Made grammatical errors.
7. Spoke in a monotone and/or failed to use gestures.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____

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INTERPERSONAL

No questions are asked for this area. Rather, the participant is evaluated based on behaviors observed during the overall interview session.

NOTES:

SAMPLE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. At the start of the session, offered a polite and enthusiastic greeting.
2. As appropriate, used amenities such as "please" and "thank you."
3. Maintained a polite, courteous, and enthusiastic demeanor during the session.
4. Actively listened to the interviewer's comments (e.g., maintained eye contact while listening, nodding while listening, etc.).
5. At the close of the session, expressed appreciation for the interviewer's time and consideration.

SAMPLE INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIORS:

1. Asked questions in an abrupt or curt manner.
2. Displayed little enthusiasm or politeness.

RATING FOR RESPONSE: _____