

Foundations—a Pedestal Group Publication

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FOUNDATIONS

The Pedestal Group

Great “Out of the Box” Interview Questions

Special points of interest:

- *Growing Your Elevator Pitch*
- *Yellow Page Advertising*
- *Online Tools to Help with Conversations*
- *Tips for Public Speaking*
- *Credit Card Numbers*
- *AND MORE!*

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We’ve all been in situations where we needed to hire someone. Formulating the questions can definitely be tough as you want to get at the right information, but you also don’t want to ask something silly. Many websites recommend questions for both hiring managers and candidates with the answers provided right along with them! So how do you ask questions that will really give you the answers you need without making the candidate uncomfortable?

In a recent survey of HR Professionals, the following questions came out as the best.

1. Job Transition: Questions about how a person moved from one job to another were seen as giving great insight into how long the person will stay, what would make them leave and mindset at each transition.

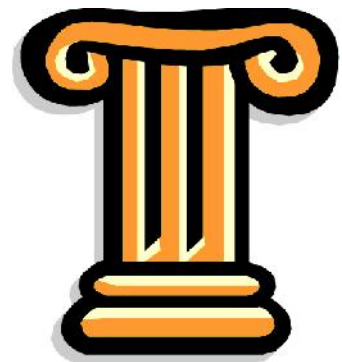
2. Individual Contribution: “What is the hardest thing you’ve ever had to do at work and why?” was seen as a great question to get the person talking about a tough situation but wouldn’t be as rehearsed or hashed through as often. Along those same lines, many people said they ask about a time the individual failed and not only why, but what they

took away from the experience.

Another great question mentioned was, “What do people come to you for?” whether that be in their personal or work life. It gets at the strength question in a different way than the norm and isn’t as rehearsed as some of the other answers.

3. Problem-Solving: Another area targeted by HR Professionals was how a person thinks through problems. Some suggestions were to give hypothetical cases and ask how the individual would solve it or to ask about a problem they solved and how they went about it. Understanding their problem solving skills helps in any position.

4. Bosses and Coworkers: Describing the best boss, coach or teacher with details as to why that person was so successful helps identify how the person will fit in with their potential supervisor. Typically they have to think a little about this as they are prepared to answer about themselves or their last supervisor. In addition, asking them to describe working environments and coworkers can help establish what the individual is looking for and how well they will fit in with the group already in



The right questions get the right results in hiring

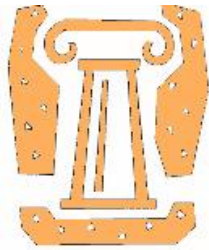
place. One participant went on to say the answers to this question help establish an effective mentor and help with on-boarding.

As a follow up to that question, others said it was important to ask how the individual handled conflict with a boss. This gives insight into problem solving and how the individual will approach others.

Putting some or all of these questions into the mix can help you identify people who will fit into your organization, understand what needs to be done, solve the problems and deal appropriately with others. All keys to making sure you have a successful hire!

The Elevator Pitch—Grow Your Conversation

The elevator pitch is definitely a critical and difficult part of your business. You have to be compelling and explain what you do but not go too long and lose your audience. So how do you do it?



Think of the first line of your elevator pitch as a conversation seed. You don't have to create the entire mes-

sage in that first sentence, just get the person to start a conversation and ask questions. One example is Sam Jones of Formation Media. When he meets new people and they ask what he does, he answers, "I buy dead newspapers." Obviously that doesn't explain what he does, but it is compelling enough to get the person to ask questions. And the minute they ask a question, you have time to really get into what you do.

If you think about conversations as

growing things, you start with planting the seed and then help it grow. It may be interrupted because the other person has to leave or something comes up. Not a problem—if the seeds are well planted, you will get the opportunity to continue the conversation over the phone or coffee. So don't try to make your elevator pitch the end-all be-all summarizing your business. Just make sure the seed is there and planted well so it can germinate into something wonderful!

Yellow Page Advertising—Stop Wasting Your Money

To Opt out of receiving a paper phone book, go to www.yellowpagesoptout.com

Effective February 1, 2011, businesses and individuals can choose to "opt out" of receiving phone books. According to

www.readwriteweb.com, "The new opt-out site was created by Yellow Pages Association, the trade organization that represents the publishers of phone books in the United States, signaling an acknowledgement that

printing and distributing paper phone books to every household is no longer a sustainable practice."

A study conducted by Harris International revealed that 70% of adults in the US "rarely or never" open a phone book when needing resources and 60% of those said they always go to the internet.

What that means for the typical business is now search engine optimization is more important than

ever. Ensuring your customers can find you when they need you quickly and easily from any device is critical to getting new business. Google and Bing are moving to more and more locally-based results helping their users find what they need and companies need to be fully versed in how to get found.

While the opt out site may not be well publicized yet, more and more people will find it in the coming months.

Tools to Help Online Conversations

The web is incredibly powerful when it comes to connecting people but sometimes it is hard to navigate all the information. You know your customers are on line, but how do you engage them in conversation? These three tools help support conversations with customers to increase your relationships.

www.flowtown.com—When you

enter an email address into this site, it tells you what social networks are connected to that email address. Right away you can find out where your customers are going and how they are getting information. A great way to find out where to connect!

www.guzzle.it—Ever wanted a quick and easy way to find out what peo-

ple are saying on the web about a given topic? Just enter the keywords into GuzzleIt and you will see relevant results from all over the web. Now you can converse on the topic with the latest and greatest information out there!

GuzzleIt is also a great way to monitor your industry. What are people saying about you, your competitors

Tips for Public Speaking

Whether it is to a large group or just a couple people from a prospect company, most people have some concerns over speaking in public. Glossophobia is the fear of public speaking and studies show it is as common as those that fear of death or spiders.

There are many organizations out there with tips on how to handle the nervousness of public speaking but Toastmasters International (www.toastmasters.org/tips.asp) definitely has the most helpful.

1. **Study your material.** It's important to know more about your subject than what you are actually planning to speak in your presentation, which will give you more comfort with the subject matter and allow you to answer unexpected questions, personalize your speech, and be more fluid and conversational.
2. **Rehearse.** Practice your presentation, ideally in the same setting and using the same equipment that you will use when you actually present. Practice with a timer and be prepared for questions or sidebars that unexpectedly use extra time.
3. **Know your audience.** Even if you're talking to strangers, try to meet some before you step up to the front of the room. It's easier to talk to people you know than a group of anonymous faces.
4. **Scope out the room.** Don't be surprised — arrive early, and know how to operate the AV equipment.
5. **Ease in slowly.** Don't dive into your prepared speech; greet the audience and use that time to calm your nerves.
6. **Use visualization techniques.** This might sound like it's straight out of the Age of Aquarius, but it works. Imagine yourself speaking clearly and confidently. Visualize getting applause - it will boost your confidence.
7. **Know that the audience wants you to succeed.** The audience really is rooting for you. After all, they want to enjoy themselves and learn something. No one hopes to be bored by a poor speaker.
8. **Don't apologize.** For anything. If you're nervous, just push through and the audience probably won't even notice.
9. **Concentrate on the message.** Focus your attention away from your own anxieties and concentrate on your message and your audience.
10. **Gain experience.** Of course, the more experience you have, the more confident you will be. Especially if you are a reluctant speaker, seek out opportunities to talk to groups to bolster your skill and your confidence.



Glossophobia is the fear of public speaking

If speaking in public is something you need to do but find it very difficult, joining an organization like Toastmasters gives you an opportunity to practice and learn how to speak in public.

Online Conversations (con't)

and your products or services? This can help you zero in on exactly what's going on in online discussions.

www.watchthatpage.com— Ever needed to know when a web page changes but hate to visit every day? Watch That Page does just that—it will send you an alert any time a change is made to a webpage

you enter. This is a great way to monitor specific pages on customer websites that could be relevant to your marketing. Work with specific people listed on a page? Watch it for personnel changes. Need to know when that product gets released? Monitor the page. That way, it isn't about you going back and looking at it, but waiting for the information to

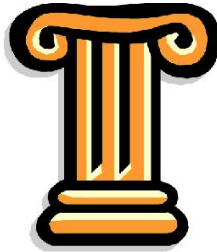
come to you.

Using tools, and others like this can help you manage your business and engage in real customer relationships.

Flowtown, GuzzleIt and Watch This Page all help organize conversations

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Putting our clients where they belong.

The Pedestal Group was founded to answer a need we saw in small businesses to have a source for help. That could be how to find and integrate the right technology, how to better hire and manage people, how to set goals and create a strategic plan, or really attack and own your marketplace.

Our team has worked in a variety of industries including staffing, recruiting and executive search, retail, technology, healthcare software / IT, higher education and franchising and the consistent theme we have found it is very hard to see the forest for the trees. In small business, that is compounded by the number of resources available.

Our approach is unique in that we don't just say it is all about the customer, it really is. The Pedestal Group puts our customers on a pedestal – right where they belong. That isn't to say the customer is always right because that is an adversarial relationship – in our case, we always come to agreement. We are always in a partnership with our clients but also remember who's the most important – YOU.

The Pedestal Group - Putting our clients where they belong.

Understanding Your Credit Card Number

Do you know how to validate a credit card number without running it through the machine? Here's how those numbers are built (and how to know it is real!).



How to determine if a credit card is real or not!

The first digit is the Major Industry Identifier. It tells the processor the type of company that issued the card:

- 1 and 2 are airlines
- 3 is Travel and Entertainment
- 4 and 5 are banking and

- financial
- 6 is merchandizing and banking
- 7 is petroleum
- 8 is telecommunications
- 9 is national assignment

The first 6 numbers identify the issuer. Cards starting with 4's are Visas while 51-55 are Mastercard, 6011, 644 or 65 are Discover and 34 or 37 are AMEX.

The last digit on the card is the "check digit" or checksum. It is used to validate the credit card number using the Luhn algorithm.

The digits between the Issuer identifier and the checksum is the account number.

To validate a credit card number without running it, you have to do a little math. Multiply the following digits by 2: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15

Next, any digit that is now more than one digit should be added together (so if the result is 14, it becomes 1+4=5). Now add the doubled digits with the undoubled digits. If the result is divisible by 10, it is a valid credit card number.

While I know this isn't a typical article, I did find it interesting information and wanted to share!

Source: mint.com/blog/1/20/2011