

## TOOL #2.C: BBI QUESTION PICK LIST

**Overview:** This tool provides a list of potential behavioral-based interviewing (BBI) questions by competency. Each question is designed to elicit details from the candidate of an actual past experience that tested the targeted competency. To provide rough guidance for candidate evaluation, the tool also outlines ideal and red-flag answer characteristics for each question set.

**Recommended for:** All HR leaders and hiring managers composing initial BBI templates.

**Time required:** One hour.

**Other tools referenced:** Tool #2.B: Critical Competency Identifier; Tool #2.D: BBI Evaluation Template.

*After determining appropriate competencies with Tool #2.B: Critical Competency Identifier, select from the pick list below—or independently compose—appropriate BBI questions to enter onto the evaluation template. (For assistance developing a template, please see Tool #2.D: BBI Evaluation Template.)*

Attitude		
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you give an example of a time when you have received negative feedback about your job performance or academic performance? Explain your reaction.</li> <li>• What frustrates you most about your current position? Can you give an example of how you have dealt with this frustration in the past?</li> <li>• When was the last time you made a big mistake? What did you do?</li> <li>• Have you ever taken a substantial risk that has failed? What was it? What did you learn?</li> <li>• Have you ever had any experience turning a problem into a success? Tell me about it.</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Answer Components</b>	<p><b>Positive Answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepts criticism well</li> <li>• Takes accountability for own actions</li> <li>• Tries to rectify unpleasant situations</li> <li>• Is generally positive and upbeat about work situations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Red Flags</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is overly defensive in response to criticism</li> <li>• Is unable to offer rational justification for actions</li> <li>• Blames failures on others</li> </ul>

### IMPLEMENTATION TIP



When training managers to deploy BBI questions, HR leaders should emphasize that interviewers should not ask any follow-up or probing questions until the candidate has identified a specific past experience. Further, compound questions should be minimized to prevent potential confusion or lack of specificity. If candidates are unable to think of a situation to demonstrate the competency upon more in-depth questioning, this itself can be a red flag.

## TOOL #2.C: BBI QUESTION PICK LIST (CONTINUED)

Communication			
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give me an example of something complicated that you have had to explain to others. What were the results?</li> <li>• Sometimes we are misunderstood by other people. Has this ever happened to you? How did you respond and what were the results? What did you do to prevent this from happening again?</li> <li>• Describe a time when you communicated some unpleasant feelings to your supervisor. What happened?</li> <li>• Tell me about a specific experience of yours that illustrates your ability to influence another person verbally. Feel free to use an example that involves changing an attitude, selling a product/idea, or being persuasive.</li> <li>• Has there ever been a time when your listening skills really paid off, maybe a time when other people missed the key idea in what was being expressed? Tell me about it.</li> </ul>		
<b>Key Answer Components</b>	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p><b>Positive Answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to communicate complex ideas to team members</li> <li>• Has good verbal skills and ability to influence listeners</li> <li>• Uses skills such as reflection, restatement, and paraphrasing</li> <li>• Values humor</li> <li>• Disagrees with authority when appropriate</li> </ul> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p><b>Red Flags</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses slang or poor grammar</li> <li>• Does not have any questions during or at the conclusion of the interview</li> <li>• Offers short answers with little explanation</li> <li>• Mumbles or offers incomplete answers</li> <li>• Frequently misunderstands the point of questions</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><b>Positive Answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to communicate complex ideas to team members</li> <li>• Has good verbal skills and ability to influence listeners</li> <li>• Uses skills such as reflection, restatement, and paraphrasing</li> <li>• Values humor</li> <li>• Disagrees with authority when appropriate</li> </ul>	<p><b>Red Flags</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses slang or poor grammar</li> <li>• Does not have any questions during or at the conclusion of the interview</li> <li>• Offers short answers with little explanation</li> <li>• Mumbles or offers incomplete answers</li> <li>• Frequently misunderstands the point of questions</li> </ul>
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Compassion			
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you ever had a situation where a co-worker came to you with a difficult personal issue? What did you do about it? What were the results?</li> <li>• Tell me about a situation in the past year in which you were confronted with an emotionally distraught customer. How did you intervene?</li> <li>• Tell me about a recent scenario when you had to help a customer or a customer’s family member cope with anxiety concerning illness, hospitalization, or ability to pay the bill.</li> <li>• Describe a time when you were able to be personally supportive and reassuring to another individual.</li> </ul>		
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Conflict Resolution			
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about the last argument you had with a coworker. What was it about?</li> <li>• Describe a situation when someone put you in the middle of an ongoing argument. What did you do?</li> <li>• Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a decision by your boss or hospital administration. Why did you disagree? What did you do about it?</li> </ul>		
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Creativity			
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about a time when you have been creative in your work. What did you do?</li> <li>• What is the most interesting thing you have done in the last three years?</li> <li>• When was the last time you “thought outside the box”? What did you do?</li> </ul>		
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Critical Thinking			
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe a hospital-level goal not easily applied to your unit. What have you done to work towards this goal in your unit’s daily activities?</li> <li>• Give me an example of a time when you developed or recognized new thinking or trends that were helpful to your organization.</li> <li>• Tell me about a time when you had to plan a complex project.</li> <li>• Think of a problem you have addressed by focusing on the underlying process rather than on an isolated event. Describe the approach you took.</li> <li>• Tell me about one major obstacle you overcame in your last job. How did you deal with it?</li> </ul>		
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Customer Service			
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think of a time when you had to deal with an unhappy customer. Describe the situation and how you handled it.</li> <li>• Have you ever had to make a change in your approach to accommodate the needs of a customer? What happened?</li> <li>• Have you ever run into an angry customer who wanted you to do something that you did not have the authority to approve? How did you handle it?</li> <li>• Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond normal expectations to improve a patient’s or family member’s experience.</li> </ul>		
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Decision Making		
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you ever had to implement an unpopular decision? What steps did you take? What was the outcome?</li> <li>• Have you ever been in a seemingly impossible position with difficult budgets?</li> <li>• Describe a situation that illustrates your delegation style.</li> <li>• Tell me about a hard decision you had to make and how you went about making that decision.</li> <li>• Tell me about a time when you took a calculated risk in a recent position. What were your considerations?</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Answer Components</b>	<p><b>Positive Answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes decisions without undue anxiety</li> <li>• Solicits appropriate input from peers or managers</li> <li>• Makes decisions based on all available evidence</li> </ul>	<p><b>Red Flags</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes unilateral decisions without consulting supervisors</li> <li>• Procrastinates about decision-making</li> </ul>
Diversity Awareness		
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about a time when you had to make necessary adaptations for another person from a different cultural background. What did you do and what were the results?</li> <li>• Give me an example of when communication with a customer or co-worker was difficult. How did you handle it?</li> <li>• Describe a situation when you worked with a person whose personal beliefs were the opposite of yours. How did you deal with it?</li> <li>• Tell me about a time when you were able to step into another person's shoes in order to discover his or her unique perspective.</li> <li>• Have you ever had a time when you felt it necessary to compromise your own immediate interests in order to fulfill another person's needs? Tell me about it.</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Answer Components</b>	<p><b>Positive Answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is sensitive to the feelings of others</li> <li>• Makes a special effort to demonstrate respect in terms of actions as well as words</li> <li>• Is adaptable to patients and co-workers with different needs, values, and opinions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Red Flags</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expresses stereotypes or biases about people different from him or herself</li> </ul>

## TOOL #2.C: BBI QUESTION PICK LIST (CONTINUED)

Financial Acumen			
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was the biggest waste of resources in your last job? How did you resolve this?</li> <li>• Tell me about a situation in which you were able to reduce costs associated with a project or process.</li> <li>• Tell me how productivity is measured in your current/last job. Describe for me a time when you had to adjust staffing or change processes in order to meet productivity standards.</li> <li>• Have you ever found yourself on the wrong side of a budget variance? How did you learn of the gap? What steps did you take to close it?</li> <li>• Tell me about a time when you had to reduce costs on the unit. How did you do it?</li> <li>• Have you ever had to defend to administration why your budget was higher than normal? What kind of data did you gather to support this position?</li> </ul>		
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Flexibility			
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share with me an example of when you changed an opinion or action plan after receiving new information.</li> <li>• Give me an example of a time when you needed to balance your needs and concerns with the needs and concerns of another person.</li> <li>• Sometimes it is necessary to work in unsettled or rapidly changing circumstances. When have you found yourself in this position? Tell me exactly what you did.</li> <li>• Tell me about a time when you had way too much to do and you had deadlines to meet. How did you handle it?</li> </ul>		
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Section 2

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Integrity			
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about a situation in which you were called upon to keep a promise or confidence.</li> <li>• Give me an example of when you chose to speak up for others when they were not present.</li> <li>• When was the last time you “broke the rules” and how did you do it?</li> <li>• Tell me about a time when you asked forgiveness for doing something wrong.</li> <li>• Share an example of a problem created for you by someone else. How did you handle it? What were the results?</li> <li>• Have you ever had no control over circumstances, yet were responsible for the final outcome? What did you do? What were the results?</li> </ul>		
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Leadership			
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the most striking example of staff conflict or dissent you have experienced. How did you handle it?</li> <li>• Describe how you have involved staff in performance improvement initiatives and other decisions pertinent to their work.</li> <li>• Give me an example of how you establish goals, responsibilities, and accountabilities for others.</li> <li>• Tell me about a past experience developing and building a leadership team.</li> <li>• What has been your experience in dealing with poor performance of employees? Give me an example.</li> <li>• Have you ever had to implement an unpopular decision? What steps did you take? What was the outcome?</li> </ul>		
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Mentoring and Motivating			
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give me an example of a time when you came up with a clever way to motivate your colleagues.</li> <li>• Tell me about a time when you acknowledged or celebrated the success of yourself or others.</li> <li>• Have you ever mentored a peer? Describe a situation when you worked with an employee or colleague to successfully improve his/her performance.</li> </ul>		
<b>Key Answer Components</b>	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p><b>Positive Answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works collaboratively with peers</li> <li>• Has a positive and upbeat attitude</li> </ul> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p><b>Red Flags</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expresses no interest in teaching</li> <li>• Speaks poorly of subordinates or colleagues</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<p><b>Positive Answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works collaboratively with peers</li> <li>• Has a positive and upbeat attitude</li> </ul>	<p><b>Red Flags</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expresses no interest in teaching</li> <li>• Speaks poorly of subordinates or colleagues</li> </ul>
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## TOOL #2.C: BBI QUESTION PICK LIST (CONTINUED)

Personal Development Drive		
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you done anything over the past year to develop yourself? What was it? How did you go about it?</li> <li>Tell me about a specific goal you set for yourself in the past. Why was it important to you? How did you achieve it and what were the results?</li> <li>We all get negative feedback from time to time. Tell me about a time you received feedback which indicated an opportunity for you to improve your job performance. What did you do?</li> <li>Have you ever been in a situation in which you made a mistake that no one else knew about? How did you handle it?</li> <li>Give me an example of a time when you went beyond your employer's normal job expectations in order to get a job done.</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Answer Components</b>	<p><b>Positive Answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accepts constructive criticism</li> <li>Distinguishes between own efforts and contributions made by others</li> <li>Displays openness to developing new skills</li> <li>Works extra hours to accomplish task</li> <li>Is proud of his or her commitment to get the job done</li> </ul>	<p><b>Red Flags</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not seek help or ask questions of co-workers or supervisors</li> <li>Offers no specific examples regarding learning new tasks on the job</li> <li>Articulates negative comments regarding training</li> <li>Implies dislike of overtime</li> <li>Implies that money is his or her primary motivator</li> </ul>
Problem Solving		
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you ever had a time when your supervisor was away from the workplace and you had to complete a project or make a decision independently? Tell me about what happened.</li> <li>Tell me about a time when you thought it was necessary to alter procedure. What was the situation and how did you handle it?</li> <li>We have all had projects or situations that have not worked out as they should have. Tell me about a time when this happened to you. How did you handle it?</li> <li>Walk me through the last big decision you had to make. What happened?</li> <li>Have you ever been in a situation that seemed to go "wrong" from the beginning? What did you do and what were the results?</li> <li>(Clinical) Tell me about a time when there was a significant change in a patient's status. How did you know? What did you do? What were the results?</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Answer Components</b>	<p><b>Positive Answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is able to take action based on available information</li> <li>Exhibits maturity, ability to learn, and emotional control</li> <li>Makes good decisions even under stress</li> </ul>	<p><b>Red Flags</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is paralyzed in stressful situations</li> <li>Procrastinates about decision-making</li> <li>Relies heavily on input of others</li> <li>Does not incorporate all available information into decision-making process</li> </ul>

## TOOL #2.C: BBI QUESTION PICK LIST (CONTINUED)

Process Improvement Development		
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you ever made suggestions for improving your work process? Describe what you did and how you achieved results.</li> <li>Would you tell me about a time when your supervisor presented you with a new process for doing something and gave you the task of implementing and evaluating that process? What did you do?</li> <li>Tell me about a time when you were faced with a situation and there was no clear policy or procedure to follow. What did you do? What were the results?</li> <li>Have there been any large changes within your current organization? Tell me about one change that affected your job. How did you react?</li> <li>Tell me about a problem that you identified and resolved by using a systematic approach.</li> <li>(Clinical) When was the last time your unit did not meet patient care standards? How was the deficiency identified and how was it improved?</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Answer Components</b>	<p><b>Positive Answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies a systematic, logical, and reasonable approach to analyzing situations</li> <li>Feels confident in assuming authority</li> <li>Can function comfortably without a structured agenda</li> </ul>	<p><b>Red Flags</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes no responsibility for own actions</li> <li>Is unfamiliar with basic process improvement methods</li> <li>Is satisfied with the status quo</li> </ul>
Teamwork		
<b>Sample Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share with me a situation in which you accomplished something as a member of a team. What was the team's purpose? What was your role?</li> <li>Describe a time when you were able to help a co-worker solve a problem or improve his or her performance.</li> <li>What is the main strength or "natural style" that you bring to a team? Describe a specific situation and how your work style affected the team's decision.</li> <li>Give me an example of a time when you confronted a negative attitude successfully, with the result of building teamwork and morale.</li> <li>Give me an example of when you have done some things for others in the organization on your own, without being asked or told to do so.</li> </ul>	
<b>Key Answer Components</b>	<p><b>Positive Answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distinguishes between own efforts and contributions made by others</li> <li>Is proud of team accomplishments</li> <li>Maintains a positive attitude in light of disagreements</li> <li>Is able to appropriately resolve conflicts</li> <li>Shares critical information up, down, and across the organization</li> <li>Follows through on explicit/implicit promises and commitments</li> </ul>	<p><b>Red Flags</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not see benefits of working in a team</li> <li>Prefers to work alone</li> <li>Uses "I" responses rather than "we" when discussing teamwork</li> <li>Does not understand differing viewpoints</li> <li>Disparages teammates</li> <li>Unable to delegate</li> </ul>