Core Values Interview Questions for Employers

Step 1: Awareness

The following questions are designed to do two things. First, they provide insight into the type of interview preparation done by the candidate. Second, they provide insight into: a) the candidate's level of perceived self-identification with the organization; and b) the candidate's ability to understand the meaning of the organization's core values. ***Bring this packet to the interview along with a printed copy of the organization's core values.***

1. Are you aware that our organization has a set of core values that we strive to live by?

2. Did you happen to review the core values published on our website?
    a. If "Yes," note their diligence and then proceed to #3.
    b. If "No," hand them a printed sheet with your organization's core values.

3. Do any of our core values stand out for you?
    a. If "Yes," ask, "Which of them do and why?"
    b. If "No," hand them the printed core values sheet and ask them to review it briefly. Then ask question 3 again, followed by question 3a.

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Step 2: Individual Core Values

These questions are designed to elicit open-ended responses from the candidate and gain further insight into the individual's core values. This will help you to assess their potential alignment with your organization.

1. What are some of your personal core values?

2. How do your personal core values show up in the way that you work? Please provide an example.

3. Which of your personal core values best align with our organization's core values?

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BONUS: Questions for Higher Level Applicants

Higher-level positions (i.e., not line-level jobs) warrant additional scrutiny when determining if an individual has a set of core values in tune with your organization's core values. Depending upon the size of your company, you may want to include the following questions when a candidate is under consideration for mid- to upper-management positions, including C-suite.

1. What is your view on the role of core values in an organization?

2. If you were to join an organization that did not have a set of core values, how would you go about developing and implementing them?
   (This question will help assess their thought process.)

3. If you have a "great employee" that doesn't embody the organization's core values, what do you do? *(e.g., Suppose you have a great producer, but the employee doesn't demonstrate the organization's core value of "respect for everyone" when dealing with people they view as less competent.)*

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