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15 Values-Based Interview Questions that Identify Authentic Leadership

Healthcare is a dynamic realm where the lives of millions depend solely on the willpower of a few. With such high stakes, exceptional leadership is more than a requirement—it is the force that shapes communities. But how do we find leaders who possess the values, resilience, and compassion needed to navigate such complexities? To put it simply, the answer lies in asking values-based interview questions to help surface authentic leadership.

Before embarking on your next executive search, review your organization's core values. Values stem from the culture and go beyond your mission and vision statement. Essentially, these values serve as a compass guiding decisions that define success. Moreover, these principles support and shape employee behavior, leadership, and overall business practices.

You can review company values by asking your team questions such as:

- What do you think our company stands for?
- How does employee feedback impact leadership decisions?

Across thousands of healthcare executive searches, we have discovered questions that unearth authentic leadership competencies during the interview process. So, whether you are a member of an executive search committee, a dedicated board member, or an ambitious healthcare leader seeking a new role, this list of questions serves as a guide for identifying those who will inspire excellence and reshape the landscape of healthcare.

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Fostering a Positive, Inclusive Culture

Building multidimensional teams is paramount to an organization's success. But creating a sense of belonging starts with leadership. At the heart of great organizations beats a profound sense of trust that binds together the internal teams and the communities they serve. In fact, studies show that teams embracing diversity and celebrating differences have happier and more productive employees who feel supported and valued.

When employees feel psychologically safe, performance improves. Such an inclusive culture starts with transparent leadership that creates safe spaces for others to be their authentic selves.

To uncover culture change agents, ask the following:

1. How do you deliver feedback?
2. How do you respond to feedback?
3. How will you build a culture of trust?
4. How do you include employee feedback into decisions?
5. What is most important in creating a positive, inclusive culture?

Ultimately, [people-centered leaders](#) excel at delivering feedback with empathy, build trust, and cultivate an environment that inspires collaboration and innovation.

Decision-Making and Learning Agility

In the healthcare industry, leaders must be agile and adept at guiding their teams and organization through ambiguity and chaos. But has your candidate's leadership style evolved to meet such shifting priorities? Leaders need courage and commitment to preserving well-being across the communities they serve—even while navigating uncertainty. Authentic leaders embrace learning as they go and “fail forward.”

Likewise, your interview questions should surface [learning agility](#) and paint a picture of a candidate's experiences, decision-making abilities, and their capacity for growth.

Some questions that reveal decision-making and learning agility include:

6. How has your leadership style changed over time?
7. How does leadership transform challenges into opportunities?
8. What did you learn from a time you had to make an unpopular decision?
9. What has been your greatest learning experience in the last six months?

Self-Awareness and Growth Mindset

Self-awareness is the compass that guides us to continuous improvement. Likewise, great leaders actively listen, embrace feedback, and commit to personal and professional growth. Introspection and emotional intelligence (EQ) are the key levers of growth.

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Ask the following interview questions to uncover EQ:

10. As a leader, what steps do you take to measure your leadership performance?
11. If you could change one thing about your leadership style, what would it be and why?
12. Is there any area of leadership where you struggle? How does it impact your performance?

Leading with Service

“They don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

To us, this quote defines the impact [servant leadership](#) has in the workforce. Servant leaders place the needs of others at the forefront, which has the power to transform culture and drive more desirable outcomes. In an interview, delve into a candidate’s dedication to serving their team and fostering an environment of compassion, empathy, and support.

Discover if your candidate embraces servant leadership by asking the following questions:

13. What are some ways by which you lead as an example?
14. How have you actively incorporated service into your team and staff?
15. What culture changes have you witnessed as a result of your leadership efforts?

Examine their dedication to inspiring and supporting the team. By exploring these aspects, you can identify leaders who prioritize the well-being of those they serve.

In your quest for building an exceptional leadership team, values-based interview questions will guide you toward transformative individuals who embody the authenticity and integrity healthcare organizations need to make positive, lasting change. Use the above questions to surface powerful leaders who inspire excellence, create forward momentum, and ultimately transform the future of healthcare.

What other questions have helped you find transformative healthcare leaders? 



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Jessica Homann brings keen, analytical insight as she helps health systems, hospitals, academic medical centers, and health insurers navigate the continuum of the talent life cycle. With nearly 20 years of experience working closely with providers, payers, and healthcare service organizations, she is adept at assisting clients recognize possible organizational challenges and creating thorough leadership strategies around the recruitment, development, and retention of executive leadership teams. [Read full bio.](#)

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