

What Raters Look for in Panel Interviews

Have you ever wondered what you're being rated on when you do a panel interview in an assessment center or a promotional process? Raters are given guidelines for scoring candidates based on how the candidate performs. You are not just rated for the content of your answers—you are also rated for the delivery!

Candidates that score the highest usually exhibit the behaviors/traits below that raters are looking for:

- Listens to all of the question
- Remembers the question
- Actually answers the question!
- Answers all of the question (especially multiple part questions)
- Stays on track and organized in answering the question
- Demonstrates a friendly disposition (a smile helps a lot!)
- Shows a love and passion for the job/position
- Speaks clearly and audibly
- Maintains good eye contact with all of the raters
- Uses proper body language and gestures
- Understands what the real issue is behind the question
- Demonstrates a concern for customer service
- Understands the values and goals of the dept. and how it relates to the position
- Shows a service-oriented attitude
- Stays calm and controlled
- Demonstrates command presence and confidence (balanced with humility)
- Is able to articulate leadership philosophy/style
- Uses time effectively for interview
- Stays succinct yet thorough in answers
- Shows an ability to see the “big picture” (how things affect the crew, dept., city, public, etc.)
- Is able to offer viable solutions where appropriate
- Demonstrates a knowledge and ability to mentor, train, and coach others
- Shows a thorough understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the position
- Demonstrates a thorough knowledge of emergency procedures
- Understands the specific issues currently facing his/her dept.
- Understands the general issues facing the fire service
- Is able to develop multiple solutions or courses of action when necessary
- Shows an ability to think globally and act locally
- Demonstrates a strong ability to lead others by using positive influence

Candidates score in the lower categories and even fail when they exhibit these behaviors/traits:

- Talks in circles and never answers the question
- Rambles on and on and on and on...
- Continually asks to have the question repeated
- Runs out of time and doesn't answer all of the questions
- Talks too low
- Avoids eye contact with one or more of the raters
- Appears too nervous or unfriendly
- Demonstrates aggressive body language
- Is unsure of answers (lacks confidence)
- Won't answer question (or says "I don't know how to answer that")
- Doesn't appear to care about getting promotion
- Appears ambivalent to the direction of the department
- Exaggerates qualifications
- Does not demonstrate a "team-playing" attitude
- Appears irritated or frustrated
- Doesn't understand the real issues
- Doesn't understand how to address the real issues
- Uses words like "ah" "um" and "uh" repeatedly
- Speaks in a monotone voice and puts the panel to sleep!
- Talks too fast
- Comes across too cocky
- Demonstrates no command presence or confidence
- Fails to understand the roles and responsibilities of the position
- Appears unprepared and disorganized
- Fails to understand the mission, vision, and goals of the dept.
- Fails to articulate his/her leadership philosophy/style
- Fails to see the "big picture" in answering questions and how things relate to each other
- Appears abrupt or rude when answering questions
- Acts like he/she is "God's gift to this promotional process"
- Does not have a clear understanding of tactics and strategies
- Cannot articulate the values of the dept. and relate them to the answers provided where appropriate