Kendall E. Matthews' Marketing Interview Two Question Aptitude Test



When hiring people I don't look at resumes. I research who they are digitally. Do they have an updated Linkedin.com profile? Do they have an Instagram account?

If they make it to the third interview, then I'll test their aptitude.

First, they present 10-page PowerPoint that solves a business problem, i.e. SEO rankings.

Second, I'll ask them a simple question I learned from the former CMO of Hubspot, the marketing automation platform. Here's how I set it up...

"I just have one more question for you. The question is actually a choice for you. The question you choose will give us a better understand of your aptitude.

"The question will involve either Funnel Strategy or Lead scoring. You decide. Do you want the funnel strategy or lead scoring question."

Question 1: Funnel Strategy

The Question:

"Draw a funnel on the whiteboard showing 10,000 visitors, 500 leads, 50 opportunities, and 10 new customers (or any other numbers you think are interesting).

Now pretend you're the CMO for the company, and you have to decide what your marketing team should do to improve their marketing."

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The Follow-Up:

Typically, the candidate will pick one part of the funnel to focus on.

If they don't, I like to push them to do just that. Once they pick one area, I question them on exactly what the team should do to improve that part of the funnel.

And I don't just want them to tell me to "improve the visitor to lead conversion rate" -- they need to tell me *how*. What are all the different tactics they would try?

Do they have any creative ideas?

Are their ideas really ways to improve that part of the funnel, or are they just generic, high-level marketing concepts?

Then tell them to pretend they've implemented their ideas and ask them to go back through the whole funnel and explain how they think each of those initial metrics have changed.

If you have time, you can also dive into other parts of the funnel.

What to Look For According to Kendall:

Here, you're looking to see how the candidate thinks about the funnel, if they have an intuitive sense of what good and bad conversion rates are, and if they understand how the funnel steps are connected.

You also want to see if they understand which different tactics you can use at each step to improve that particular step. (For instance, if they say the lead-to-opportunity conversion rate is bad, the right answer is *not* to write more blog articles.)

I also like to see if they understand that when you make changes to the funnel, conversion rates might change beyond the specific step you worked on. For instance, increasing the visitor-to-lead conversion rate might lower the conversion rate from lead to opportunity.

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Question 2: Lead Scoring

The Question:

"Assume you have an Excel spreadsheet with 10,000 leads from a few months back -- long enough that those leads' sales cycle has passed.

The file contains information about each lead, such as their industry, title, company size, and what they did to become a lead (e.g. downloaded an ebook).

Also in the file is whether they closed as a customer, and how much their order was for.

Can you use this information to create a lead score? How would you do it?"

The Follow-Up:

Most people will start to talk about "looking at the data" and "sorting the data." Push them to tell you how they would do that in Excel, or in another program like Tableau.

There's no way in the world someone can "eyeball" 10,000 rows; you need to use statistical analysis.

They also might focus on one industry. If they do that, you should ask them what they would say if the small businesses in one industry are good leads, but the Fortune 5000 companies in another industry are also good leads?

Basically, just keep pushing them until they give up.

What to Look For According to Kendall:

The goal of this question is to see how far they can go and how sophisticated they can think about lead quality. There's only two people that I've interviewed and hired that have completely dominated this question.

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Most people are unable to look at more than one variable at a time. They don't understand how to analyze rows of data. At a minimum, you want to find people who look at the leads who closed in one group and compare them to the leads who did not close, look at multiple variables at a time, and use statistical functions in Excel that can do summary tables and pivot tables.

If you find someone who starts making a coherent argument about why you might want to use logistic regression, factor or cluster analysis, actuarial science, or stochastic modeling to figure this out ... **hire them on the spot. Or call me so I can hire them.**

Important Note: I often start this question by simply asking, "How should you create a lead score?"

This is how I sort out the people brainwashed by the marketing automation industry or college professors.

Anyone who answers, "You make a lead score by talking to the sales team and then assigning 10 points to each of the things they say," is wrong. That is not a data-driven approach to lead scoring. That's not scalable. It is too simplistic, if you want to generate over $2 million in revenue.

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Next Steps:

Now you have the blueprint for better new hire interviews. No more asking about what's your favorite Skittle color? Be specific. Test them. Ask questions for what is the person will actually be doing.

If you do this, then you can to move the needle for your company.

Moving Forward,

Kendall E. Matthews,

P.S. Follow me on Snapchat at KendallGo43 for my daily insights.