

USE THIS BEFORE AND DURING AN INTERVIEW — CHAPTER 11

The Potential Test

Skills can be taught. Potential is much harder to create. These four questions help you see past the CV.

 **Before you start:** Follow your organisation's structured interview process. This worksheet sits alongside it, not instead of it. A strong CV tells you what someone has done. Watch out for the halo effect — when a familiar background feels like a guarantee. This helps you look past it.

CANDIDATE NAME	ROLE / DATE
Q1	Can they learn? Listen for: How they talk about feedback they've received. Mistakes they've made. What they changed because of them.
Q2	Will they listen? Listen for: Do they answer the question asked, or the question they wanted? Do they pause before responding?
Q3	Do they care? Listen for: Specific questions about the role, the team, the customer. Genuine curiosity — not prepared questions ticked off a list.
Q4	Can they make you feel like the only person in the room? Listen for: Eye contact, presence, whether the conversation feels like a transaction or a connection. Technique can be taught. Genuine curiosity is much harder to sustain.

YOUR OVERALL IMPRESSION

10–12 Invest Strong across all four. Worth developing.	7–9 Consider carefully Which question scored low — and does it matter for this role?	Below 7 Careful consideration Skills can be trained. These four things are harder to develop.
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REMEMBER

THE POTENTIAL TEST — SCORING GRID

Skills can be taught. Potential is harder to create.

Use this grid during or immediately after the interview.

CANDIDATE	ROLE / DATE
_____	_____

1 = Little evidence · 2 = Some evidence · 3 = Strong evidence — circle one per row

QUESTION	1	2	3
Can they learn? Listen for: How they talk about feedback, mistakes, and what they changed. Curious, seeks improvement, open to feedback	☐	☐	☒
Will they listen? Listen for: Do they answer the question asked, or the one they wanted? Listens to understand, not just to reply	☐	☐	☒
Do they care? Listen for: Specific questions about the role, the team, the customer. Genuine interest in the role, the customer, the team	☐	☐	☒
Can they connect? Listen for: Does the conversation feel like a transaction or a connection? Made you feel like the only person in the room	☐	☐	☒

Total Score

Out of 12

/12

10–12

Invest

Strong across all four. You've probably found someone worth developing.

7–9

Consider carefully

Potential is there but uneven. Which question scored low — and does that matter for this role?

Below 7

Careful consideration

Skills can be trained. The things this test measures are much harder to develop.

REMEMBER

Competency is about capability. Experience is about history. A strong CV tells you where someone has been. This test helps you see where they could go.