Introduction*

Our team is growing and we need to develop existing talent while hiring new rock stars to propel our business to the next level. Every organization has unique needs in terms of specialization and cultural fit that we cannot hope to address. But, for leaders who've decided to pursue "*inbound*" and want to ensure candidates have the baseline profile for success, here are questions to incorporate into the interview process.

These questions range from behavioral to problem solving questions. As in many roles, whenever possible, hiring leaders should also seek sample work or projects that a candidate can share to elaborate on their level of skill. Ask for blog posts, eBooks, videos and even budget spreadsheets. Any modern Inbound Information Technology professional will be thrilled to showcase his / her work.

Consider this sample set of questions as a baseline so that you get a complete picture of the candidate.

Are you the next modern Inbound Information Technology rock star?

Are you a 'Digital Native' or are you able to easily adapt to digital?

What blogs do you read? What RSS reader do you use?

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Do you rank first for your name in Google? Why / why not?
What would you do to maintain (or improve) this ranking?

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Do you have a blog? Can you show it to me?

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Do you use Facebook or LinkedIn? When was the last time you updated your profile?

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Do you use Twitter? Can you show me?
How do you engage with others via Twitter?
If you had to double your followers, how would you do it?

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Do you have a channel on YouTube? Can you show it to me?
What tools did you use to create your video content?

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Are you 'Analytical' and curious by nature?

It's difficult to figure out if someone is analytical from a standard interview. Test for it during the interview with the following techniques:

How did you measure the success of _____?
> (Blog, social media, new website, PR, some project you did, etc.)

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Give your candidate a sample pipeline with theoretical numbers for website visits, leads and customers. Can you 'get' conversion rates? Can you identify where the 'bottlenecks' or 'holes' might be in the funnel. Describe how you would go about validating your hypothesis and what next steps this might uncover.

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What part of "*inbound*" would you start with for our business?
> (This question ensures you understands the basics. If you say "social media" when you are getting very little organic search traffic, for example, the answer demonstrates that you may not be good at seeing the big picture.)

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Ask your candidate to bring his / her favorite spreadsheet to the interview so you can see how well versed they are with analytical tools, pivot table and more. Ask what counter-intuitive insight came out of the spreadsheet model and have him/her show you in graph format.

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Do you have 'Reach' in terms of your personal and professional network?

How many people subscribe to your blog?
Do you talk about our industry on your blog or do you talk about personal stuff?

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How many Facebook followers do you have?
Do you talk about our industry at all on your Facebook account?

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How many LinkedIn connections do you have?
How do you use LinkedIn?
Do you only use it for job searches or also for networking and engagement?

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How many Twitter followers do you have?
Do you talk about our industry on your Twitter account?

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Do you have 'Reach' in terms of your personal and professional network?

Are you a natural 'Content Creator'?

What type of content have you created in the past besides your blog?

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Which content piece are you most proud of? Why? Can you show it to me?
How long did it take you to create this? Did you do all the work or were there
others involved? If so, in what capacity?

> (Beware the 'content outsourcers' – some outsourcing is good, but you need
> to be confident with a keyboard and cup of coffee as a starting point.)

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Can you explain _____ _(insert topic)_ to me in a simple way?

> "_Inbound_" is about making your industry interesting and helping to solve
> customer problems with content. This question makes sure that you can drop
> industry jargon and communicate a simple idea in a clear and engaging way.

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Do you have experience in different content formats (i.e. written, long vs. short
form, video, audio, etc.)?

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If I asked you to take data from your spreadsheet and create an infographic, how
would you go about doing that?

> BONUS: If you have a good grasp of popular multimedia tools like Photoshop,
> Final Cut, Camtasia and more, jump for joy! Show your work and discuss how
> much time it took you to put out the polished product.

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If you had to publish one blog post per day to generate the traffic and leads required, how would you approach the challenge? How would they involve the rest of the company and create an editorial calendar to succeed?

This question focuses on if you can be a blog editor - not just a solo-blogger.

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