

INTERVIEW WARNING SIGNS

CHEAT SHEET

FOR VETERAN HIRING MANAGERS



Vague or overly cautious references

When references only offer generic praise or sound scripted, it may indicate hesitancy or deeper issues. Try: “If you could give this person one area to grow in, what would it be?”

Inconsistent recall of key milestones

If they can't remember specific achievements, dates of promotion, or tools they used, they may not have had hands-on involvement.

Switches up during salary talk

If the tone changes dramatically (from enthusiastic to closed-off or combative) once pay is brought up, that could signal future issues with trust or negotiation.



1

Over-polished = Over-rehearsed

If a candidate's answers sound too perfect, it may be rehearsed or coached. Look for real, messy stories—not just clean victories. Ask follow-ups like: “What went wrong?” or “What would you do differently?”

2

No ownership of failure

If a candidate can't name a mistake they made or deflects blame, that's a warning sign. High performers are usually self-aware and willing to talk about lessons learned.

3

4

Focused on title, not impact

Candidates who talk a lot about job titles, org charts, or perks—but can't articulate the value they brought—might be more status-driven than results-driven.

5

6

7

Doesn't ask any real questions

Someone who's polite but doesn't ask about your team, challenges, or goals may be uninterested or interviewing broadly without intent.



INTERVIEW WARNING SIGNS CHEAT SHEET CONT.

Culture fit mimicry

Overly-agreeable candidates who mirror your tone and values too perfectly may be trying to “play the part” without showing depth. Ask what they’d contribute to your culture, not just how they align with it.

8

9

10

Passive voice in storytelling

Statements like “that got handled” or “things improved” can be red flags. Who handled it? What exactly improved? Lack of ownership can mask inexperience.

Can’t describe the role they’re applying for

Ask: “What do you understand this role to be?” If they struggle to articulate what the position entails, they may not have fully engaged with the opportunity—or worse, may be applying in bulk without strategy.

Pro Tip: Don’t rely on one interview. Use our interview scorecard and include multiple team members to help catch what you might miss.



Want help avoiding hiring mistakes?
USE us! Visit [US-Enhanced.com](https://www.us-enhanced.com)

