



## Using Trial Tasks in Interview for Community Engagement Director

This project was completed to help a member brainstorm possible interview tasks for candidates for a community engagement leader.

### Considerations

- There's a big opportunity for bias to enter in - scope the expectations and detail the process as much as possible in advance to make sure you are not evaluating on fuzzy criteria
  - Consider asking them to do something that's already done with a set process to evaluate them in an unbiased way
- The best unbiased interview questions ask about examples of past performance - whenever possible, use this technique. Save the trial task for things you can't test with past experience
- Make sure this is not a request for unpaid labor

### Questions to Think About

- Would you rather understand what they do (if so, examine the output) vs how they work (if so, understand their approach and collaboration)
- What are you trying to get out of the exercise: collaborative style, creativity, leadership?
- Do you know what "great" looks like in advance? Consider the existing team and skill gaps you need to fill in the leader, not just what you want to fill
- Which job responsibilities are hardest to understand from a candidate's past experience?

### Examples of Good Exercises

- Foreign service exam--defend a proposal
- <https://www.amazon.com/Case-Point-Complete-Interview-Preparation/dp/0971015880> - the prep book that Harvard gave me when Marc Consentino was working for the Kennedy School's career center. I've heard it's sort of considered the gold standard for preparing for case study interviews.

### Skills to test and ideas to test them

- Skills: Idea AND Execution capability
  - Invent a fake partnership - 'pitch' how org could work with them and then create a plan for the first 30 days
- Skills: Ability to handle changes, pushback
  - Ask how they would execute the above partnership plan with half the time and \$\$, or pushback on a key part of the plan to see how they would respond/modify
- Skills: evaluating program impact

- Provide a fake set of programs - ask for an overall rubric and deeper look at a specific program to evaluate more closely
- Skills: innovation & knowledge of the industry/org
  - Take a program they like/provide a partnership to evaluate and see how they would adjust it for the organization
- Skills: project management and time prioritization
  - Build a first 90 days plan with a set of goals, existing relationships (but make it fake so everyone is dealing with the same information)
- Providing existing programs - high-level evaluation/proposal for each
- Theoretical in terms of what does community/partnership mean to them - speak to programs that already exist
- Proposal for potential 'second stage' opportunities for an opera organization and rationale for which are better or worse