Nader Twal

Here are my answers to your questions. I assume that they are confidential and will not be associated with my name specifically. Please let me know if this is not the case.

**(1) What did you study? Where did you go to school? When did you graduate?**

* Psychology, B.S. (UC Davis) 1996
* Teaching Credential, English Language Arts (CSU, Sacramento) 1997
* Theology and Biblical Studies, M.A. (Fuller Theological Seminary (2006)
* Administrative Credential, 2013

**(2) How did you get into your career?**

* Hired directly from student teaching while I was finishing up my teaching credential.

**(3) What do you do in your job?**

* My LinkedIn profile is a good overview of this... here's a direct link: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nader-twal-01716b93/>

**(4) What are some issues that you deal with?**

* Complex systems change
* Shortage of funding
* Balancing compliance with innovation when working within Ed Code and Federal/State guidelines

**(5) What are some important characteristics for your co-workers/employees to have?**

* Complex Problem Solvers
* Self-starters/self-directed and willing learners
* Embrace experimentation and informed risk taking (adaptable)
* Strong coaching skills
* Clear and effective communicators

**(6) What are some negative characteristics that you see in your co-workers/employees?**

* I work with an all star team so I don't know that they have the negative characteristics you seek here.
* The negative characteristics that would impede my hiring of staff include: contentiousness, self-promotion, abrasive communication style, fiscal irresponsibility, "free lancing" instead of advancing strategic initiatives.

**(7) How do you motivate your employees to solve problems?**

* We use design thinking as a fundamental approach to addressing these problems. You can learn more about design thinking here: <https://www.ideou.com/pages/design-thinking>
* We have bi-weekly team meetings where we discuss these problems and open up the opportunity for people to team up on addressing these issues.

**(8) What are some goals that you make in your team? What are the consequences of not meeting these expectations/goals?**

* Our goals are typically tied to strategic system wide goals, departmental goals, and personal goals.
* We monitor them frequently so that we do not need to have a punitive system if goals are not met. What I need to see is progress and reasons as to why a goal was not met. I want to see attempts and persistence in meeting goals, whether or not they are personally attained in every case.

**(9) What does a new hire/new employee do?**

* Not sure what you mean here.
* We typically take them through an on-boarding process to orient them to the department, our processes, and the specific work that they will be doing.

**(10) What motivates you in your job? How do you encourage/motivate your employees to be successful?**

* Intrinsic motivation: I feel a deep moral purpose in what I do. Education is the profession that educates all others so I take the responsibility seriously. I see the work as an extension of my faith lived out in the world, and I see education as a vehicle to achieving social justice. Extrinsic motivations: Celebration of success, seeing an innovation we initiated take root and become a fundamental part of how business is done.
* I encourage my team by celebrating their successes publicly and privately; giving them some autonomy in their work if they maintain a focus on the larger strategic plan; give them time and space to work on "passion projects" that advance the school system as a whole

**(11) How do your company (or maybe school) values and mission affect your work?**

* They are fundamental and formative to our work. We use them as the launching pad for our departmental vision, mission, and goal setting process. Our action plans reflect the way we will work within our jobs to achieve/support that greater vision/mission.

**(12) How do you make sure that people are acting responsibly?**

* We have a clear set of policies and procedures defined by our HR department.
* We use one-on-one meetings/touch ins, observations in the field, evaluations/performance reviews, and peer feedback to reflect on peoples' actions.

**(13) How would you define your management style?**

* Inspirational, aspirational, collaborative, highly accountable, systems-oriented
* I'm an INTJ personality type and the "Management Style" defined on this webpage is pretty accurate: <https://www.16personalities.com/intjs-at-work> Though I am highly collaborative and thrive in team environments when working with colleagues

**(14) How do you make decisions?**

* Based on priorities identified in the strategic plan. When the decision does not require this kind of alignment, I work with peers to review relevant data (quantitative, qualitative, and perception) to identify gaps in our understanding. Using empathy data gathered from those whom the decision will most impact, I work with my tam to define the root challenge, before we fo through rapid cycles of ideation, prototyping, and testing. Those prototypes that show the greatest promise and impact are the ones that we field test and then scale.

**(15) How do you solve problems?**

* Systemic issues: Using design thinking, as mentioned above.
* Relational problems at work: I try to abide by James 1:19

Please let me know if you want to discuss any of these.

**Mike Seitz | Computer Science, San Diego State | SW Dev. Mgr/Engineering Manager/Deputy Sub Project Manager**

**Northrop Grumman | Integrated National Systems (currently) | 2009 - present [almost 9 years]**

**What do you do?**

* Dealing with barriers
* Break down high level tasks
* Lay out money that will be spent each month
* Present accomplishments to customers
* Cost thresholds -> Variance reporting
* Team executing in order to plan
* Personnel issues
* Clear the way for the developers to do their job
* cost, schedule, clearing hurdles
* working with 2 entry level out of 30 employees

**What are some issues that you deal with?**

Technical issues

* Interfacing with other groups
* Software bugs
* Talking about the software
* Software compliance to standards
* Clarifying expectations

Personal issues: Conflicts

* someone yelled at me, “I didn’t like his tone”
* Can’t work with a woman example
* work with HR, Legal
* Accommodations

Management issues

* variance reporting
* Explain overspending, why behind schedule
* Explanations to customers why you are behind
* Communicate delays
* Weekly reports, let them know that we are running into trouble
* Prime them for monthly meeting w/ explanation for why
* Sometimes the engineer just didn’t get it done

**How do you make sure that the employee can do the task that they are assigned?**

Grade levels: level 1 (low), 2, 3, 4, 5 (highest)

* Set of expectations for each level
* Won’t give an architecture task to an entry level
* Assign tasks based on complexity and experience
* level 1: test drivers/test stubs, verification/unit testing, not CAT1 code,
  1. verify reqs
  2. look at more senior level work
  3. given problems that are quick to solve
* level 2: operational code

**Do you personally interview candidates?** Yes

**What do you look for in a candidate during interviews?**

* make resume talk to job that you’re applying to
* resume: degree, institution
* basic level of knowledge based on degree
* focus on attitude, social skills
* willingness to do the job
* humility
* with a lack of confidence, nervousness: candidates don’t ask questions, one way interview, not a conversation
* do they fit in with the rest of the group? can they work well with others?
* communication skills
* conversation
* tailor resume, highlight skills

**What are some important characteristics for your employees to have?**

* willingness to pick up new technologies
* ability to pick it up quickly and make it work, success in a new situation
* interest, drive, passion
* Ability to adapt
* ability to problem solve

**What are some negative traits that you see in your employees? (things to improve on)**

* not identifying problems early and falling behind
* lack of communication: didn’t want to bring up a problem
* senior developers need to solve their own problems, figure out things on their own
* senior devs not taking the lead
* tech leads giving the problem away, “I’ll let you solve the problem”
* working with technical counterpart: tech counterpart shouldn’t give the problem away
* work with different groups to solve the technical problem

**How do you motivate your employees to solve problems?**

* have a conversation with them
* Letting them know the expectations
* *highest rating for the employees at the end of the year (like a performance review?)*
* giving honest, immediate feedback
* provide timely feedback to the employee
* better to be coached and great than not coached and average

**What are some consequences of not meeting expectations/goals?**

* takes a lot to not meet expectations
* a conversation, feedback
* Secondary: performance improvement plan to give employee another chance
* Talk to HR to develop PIP: you will complete software that does this, this and this, objective results
* check at the end of the week for four weeks, success = off PIP, problem solved
* For a period of four weeks, functional mgr + hr + me
* If they do not meet PIP, they are subject to termination, being fired (in extreme cases)

**What’s the application process like, from application to hire?**

* application through website (req id)
* talent acq. professional familiar with what the hiring manager is looking for goes through resumes not filtered out by application scanner
* random people apply for engineering positions
* hiring managers get 200+ engineers
* Call them in for interviews

**What does a new hire do?**

* orientation, company culture, series of briefings, set up computer accounts
* looking at documentation, establishing foundation
* brand new don’t understand the domain that we work in

**What motivates you?**

* desire to exceed expectations of customer
* further careers of employees
* doesn’t tolerate late products
* do what i can to make sure that things are on time
* look for opportunities for people to shine, to improve, to get exposure so that people know who and what they’ve accomplished
* I want employees to succeed and when I rate employees i want them to be successful

**How do you motivate employees to be successful?**

* they are motivated to succeed on their own
* program requires extracurricular work
* don’t get too comfortable with work
* “if you want to learn the latest and greatest” advertising program attracts people that want to succeed

**How do you company values and mission affect your work?**

* very American values
* hard work, honesty, integrity (not stick you with a higher bill later)
* deliver a product that really works

**How do you make sure that people are acting ethically and responsibly? (33:15)**

* little opportunity ethical situations
* cost up front
* mission assurance
* generating test data
* verify requirements
* institutional checks and balances

**How would you define your MGMT style? (44:00)**

* left to their own devices
* checked on occasionally
* Pretty loose
* intervene when it affects the schedule

**How do you make decisions? How do you solve problems?**

* easiest solution that is legally and ethically correct
* right enough
* “better is the enemy of good enough”

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What did you do before 2009?

Emotional Intelligence to get the best out of different people

There are employee resource groups

Get a feel for someone and take our chances

How important is the GPA requirement?

* Really important
* Personally take other factors into account
* Show that they are a hard worker

“Best athlete” - Hire the best person