1.2.5: **Interviewing skills**

* Teaching mindset

Resources

*Kence - Generate content*

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SCRIPT

Now that we've discussed the different ways that machines make decisions, Math, Menus and Manuals, let’s talk about how to interview subject matter experts.

One of the most important skills when analyzing problems is talking with subject matter experts about the problems they are trying to solve. This requires a teaching mindset and a lot of curiosity.

You'll use these interviews to start the brain design process by:

(1) finding the pain points in their process;

(2) discovering how they make decisions when they encounter these pain points; and

(3) uncovering underlying strategies that guide their decision-making.

So one of the most important skills to develop when analyzing problems and talking to subject matter experts about the problems they're trying to solve—which then you'll use to design a brain later—is asking really good questions and performing strong interviews.

For almost four years pretty much every day I would show up to some location where I didn't know anything about what I was about to get into.

Whether it's a bulldozer and how bulldozers work; Or whether it's about how drones fly; or whether it's about how cheetos get made, I didn't know anything.

So you have to have a really strong curiosity and a desire to learn and be interested.

My sister's curious, she loves engineering and she and I used to watch this show called junkyard wars, where they put like three or four engineers in a junkyard and give them a goal like you have to build something that will pull 1000 pounds for the greatest distance and then they spend 12 hours building it

We were fascinated and that's the mindset that really helps when you're designing Autonomous AI.

**[Point #1 – Assume the beginner’s mind]**

At this stage in the process of designing an Autonomous AI you have to get inside the mind of the expert–when you're not the expert.

The first thing that I do in an interview is come in with the mindset that I don't know much about this and I'm talking with people that really do know about this. I bring that curiosity and desire to learn.

# Point #2 – Respect the expert

The second thing that's really important is respect for the subject matter expert

Some subject matter experts I’ve spoken to say thank you so much for not treating me like an idiot

They may have experienced AI experts that come across to engineering experts as condescending; talking in jargon, using a bunch of abbreviations and acronyms that make the REAL experts feel lost.

I try to communicate everything that I'm discussing in very plain language and avoid alienating the engineering expert with jargon.

I ask questions that respect the person I'm talking with, ALWAYS assuming there's a reason why they're doing exactly what they're doing.

I might have some amazing new technology, but there is no replacement for their expertise.

If you respect experts you'll have a lot better time of it, you’ll form some really great relationships,

and you'll end up with a lot better Autonomous AI

# 20 Questions

Let me give you a few questions now we've talked about the two things I think are most important, which is (1) curiosity and (2) respect for the subject matter expert

Here are a few questions that you can use in your interviews.

I like to start with open ended questions.

Question 1: So why don't you just describe to me the process from beginning to end and how you do things

i'll start with a question that open ended because I don't want to constrain them

I don't know anything about their work, and there's a lot I want to learn.

As they're describing the process I LISTEN FOR PAIN POINTS

things they are saying they need help with.

I might stop them and say oh that's interesting.

How do you do this?

Or what's difficult about that?

Or, you said that things often go wrong during this part; why did they go wrong during this part and not the other part.

What are the most difficult steps?

How are you currently making the decision? THAT'S THE NEXT KEY QUESTION

When does your current decision making method not work out well?

What things are hard to learn?

Are there any rare scenarios or rare cases that are very high value? because sometimes people say, this only happens once every few months but, when it happens, we could lose a million dollars in an hour;

Or it happens only once every 10 years but you could lose $20 million in a few days.

These things are important to know.

And then I ask questions like what strategies do you use?

What scenarios do you encounter?

What strategies do you map to those scenarios?

— You’ll learn more about strategies and scenarios in the next few weeks —

How can you tell if your strategy is working well?

How can you tell if it's going wrong?

What adjustments do you make?

So as they're talking through their process ask these kinds of questions and take notes,

I take a lot of notes.

After about 45 minutes of this kind of interview, you should have a very good idea of the scope of the process, and how the expert thinks through the process.

You’ll understand the boundaries around the problem this company or business or organization wants you to solve for them

and you may have an inkling about the AI that you should try to design for them.

You know, one of the themes of this entire specialization is curiosity and if someone asked me what's the one quality that you need, to be good at this Autonomous AI thing, it's actually not math skills, even though it's helpful, it's not analytical thinking, even though that's certainly helpful, it's actually curiosity.

Be prepared to practice being curious… you're going to need to ask good questions in order to perform useful interviews.

To help you, we prepared a job aid. It's like a cheat sheet that will help you organize your thoughts as you practice asking these interview questions. Try using this as a framework for practicing your interview skills,

I encourage you to investigate a problem that you know about. Maybe interview a friend or a family member.

Or take a problem that you're facing at work and interview a colleague about something that they're really good at

Interviewing is a skill that gets better with practice.

PDF - [Interview Questions Job Aid](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1x-EbRaEaCdiHhKoGnAg5zXkAqOkrH0cOERMwul0gdNQ/edit?usp=sharing)