

SI 501 - K018F: Interview Protocol for Talent Guard

List of Interviewees



Protocol

[Introduction]

Hi, my name is [Interviewer], and this is [Note Taker] – we’re master’s students at the University of Michigan School of Information. As you hopefully have heard, my class is doing a consulting project with your organization. We are here to understand better how TalentGuard employees and clients think about Talent Guard’s talent assessment software and see how it might be improved. This interview will take about 60-90 minutes, during which time we’ll go through some questions, and I might ask you to show me how you actually conduct your work. Throughout, I’d like you to treat me as if you’re describing the situation to someone who isn’t familiar with the software or even with TalentGuard. I’m here to learn from you.

A couple of things before we start. To the extent possible, we will take your comments to be confidential. We will aggregate all the comments from the five interviews we’re conducting so that your comments are not easily traced to you. If we quote you in our final report, we will do so without identifying your name or specific role. If there’s anything you really don’t want on the record, even if it’s anonymous, please let me know that, too. Also, this interview is entirely voluntary on your part – if for any reason you want to stop, please let me know. We can end the interview at that point with no repercussions for you of any kind. If you wish, I can also throw out my notes of what you’ve told me until that point.

Do you mind if I take an audio recording? This is just so that my team doesn’t miss anything – no one at your organization or otherwise will have access to the recording. Thanks.

Do you have any questions for me? All right, then, let’s proceed.

Commented [1]: If this is on zoom, it could be beneficial to ask if they’re willing to share their screen for a bit as they walk through the software. Would be helpful to see a real-time interaction.

Commented [2]: This is just a suggestion, and do what works for you: I think it might be easier to do bullet points for your introduction as it may be easier to follow as a script.

Commented [3]: If this is on Zoom, it may be better to just say "recording" rather than "audio recording." You will be recording visuals as well if this is on Zoom, by default. You could, as an alternative, tell them that keeping the camera on or turning it off is up to them. If this is in person, disregard!

Interview Questions: Developers

[Overarching Question]

- What do you think are the current pain points for users or the barriers between potential users and the TalentGuard skill management product?

[Warm-Up]

- How long have you been working at TalentGuard?
- What does your job entail?
 - Do you ever personally use the software?
- What aspects of the software are you most familiar with? Can you walk me through them?

[Workflow]

- What is your understanding of good user experience and/or workflow?
 - [Follow up, if they don't include in their response]
 - Can you walk me through the specifics of why these things make a good user experience?
 - Can you perhaps provide some TalentGuard specific examples that have informed your understanding of what makes a good user experience?
- Can you explain to me what your understanding of a "skill" is? Can you provide an example or two?
 - [Follow up, if they don't include in their response]
 - Why is this how you define "skill"?
 - How is this understanding of "skill" incorporated into the software?
 - Have you heard any alternate interpretations of "skill"? Since they do not match your definition, why are these incorrect, in your opinion?
- Can you walk me through your ideal use case for the TalentGuard software?
 - [Follow up, if they don't include in their response]
 - Step-by-step, how do you anticipate a user to experience your product?
 - Where does a user encounter difficulties?
 - Where does a user excel?
 - What are the pain points in your opinion?
 - Why do these pain points exist?
 - How did you come to the above conclusions?
- How does TalentGuard conduct user testing? Could you please walk me through the most recent time the company evaluated the product's workflow?
 - [Follow up, if they don't include in their response]
 - What conclusions did you draw after this user test?
 - What were some potential improvements that could be made?
 - How did the company respond to these findings? What did you do to improve?

Commented [4]: This question is a bit vague. I would suggest asking them to identify a concrete example of something they believe has good UX design, rather than asking the abstract "what is" question.

Commented [5]: I like your previous follow up questions. I'm just a bit confused by the phrase "specific examples." Are you referring to the effective designs of TalentGuard's products?

Commented [6]: Based on the rest of your questions, it seems that this aspect should be emphasized a lot more. I could be misunderstanding as I don't have all the details on your project, but the latter questions don't seem to really touch on this "skill" aspect of the software itself and how the idea of "skills" are incorporated. It might be useful to hear more about this from the client. In general, I'd like to see a thread of this idea of "skill" weaved throughout even more.

Commented [7R6]: I also find these set of questions fascinating in general, as they deal with the idea of "skill" in both a concrete and abstract way.

Commented [8]: I like the open-ended nature of this question - it allows a lot of space for them to have all sorts of different responses. That said, you may want to be prepared to ask them to elaborate a bit more on their response.

Commented [9]: Sometimes double-questioning people leads to confusion. I think you could make this two questions, or, alternatively, only use the second question.

Commented [10]: Your follow-up questions are really good and applicable to both primary questions. I would suggest splitting the primary questions into two different ones but keep the follow-ups.

- What are some challenges regarding designing or developing that you have experienced while working on this project?
 - [Follow up, if they don't include in their response]
 - How did you solve the problem?

[Results]

- Can you describe the onboarding experience?
 - [Follow up, if they don't include in their response]
 - On average, how long does it take for users to become familiar with the product?
 - Were there any situations where users were held back due to the complexity of the product?
 - Does TalentGuard provide any onboarding training/tutoring for the clients? If yes, how does it take place?
- Based on your research and knowledge of users, what are the most significant user pain points in the current user flow?

Commented [11]: I would clarify what you mean by this right off the bat. For example, start the question with, "Once a client has been selected, how would you describe the onboarding experience for new clients?"

Commented [12]: You may want to consider making this the main question above - it feels a bit repetitive otherwise

Commented [13]: Depending on interviewees' job roles, will they understand these terms?

Commented [14]: As I move through these set of questions, I'm thinking it would be best to look at how the idea of "skills" connects to the other questions. I feel that it is a bit disjointed as it is now and that as you do the interview questions, important information can be left out because it is not reflected throughout.

Commented [15]: Maybe as a follow up to this, gain some insight into their priorities for changes to help focus in on their expectations.

[Improvement]

- What changes would you like to see made in TalentGuard?

Interview Questions: Clients—Managers

[Overarching Question]

- How do you feel about your experience using the software; how can the software be improved from your perspective as someone assessing subordinates?

[Warm-Up]

- How did you first hear about TalentGuard?
 - Did you decide to use it the first time?
- Have you ever used other talent management software before TalentGuard?
 - If yes, what is the software? What do you like or dislike about it?
- What made you decide to start using TalentGuard software?
 - Was there a specific event that persuaded you to start using the software?
 - How did your company make this decision?
 - Who was involved?
- How long have you been using TalentGuard software?
 - How long do you think it has taken to fully implement the use of the software in your company? Have there been any delays? If so, what are they?
 - You've been using it for [XYZ] [weeks/months/years], right? How long did it take you to learn it?
 - Do you find the software difficult to use? If so, how would you rate the difficulty on a scale of 1-10 [with 10 being the highest]? Why?

Commented [16]: Your first follow-up question is essentially a more concrete version of this question. I would suggest using that instead of this relatively closed question.

Commented [17]: How does learning it differ from "fully implement"ing it?

[Workflow]

- Can you walk me, step-by-step, through how your company has integrated TalentGuard?
 - a. *[Follow up, if they don't include in their response]*
 - b. How did your company discover TalentGuard?
 - c. How many employees use the software?
 - d. What data do you regularly need to input as a manager? Were the definitions and prompts the software provides clear enough for you to know what information to provide?
 - e. In your company, who are the primary users of the software? Who interacts with the software the most?
 - f. Have you encountered any issues getting employees to participate in using the software?
 - g. What incentives do employees have to use the software?
 - h. How are employees incentivized to use the software?
- Thinking back to the most recent time you used TalentGuard, can you describe the end-to-end process of assessment?
 - a. *[Follow up, if they don't include in their response]*

Commented [18]: Is this the same as the first warm-up question?

Commented [19]: This may provoke a 'yes/no' answer - consider asking something like: "What/How was your experience with the definitions and prompts provided by the software?"

Commented [20]: These feel really similar?

- b. Can you give me a play-by-play of how you input information into the software and what it was like to do so? *[Check for understanding of emotions]*
- c. Can you explain to me what your understanding of a “skill” is? Can you provide an example or two?
- d. What kind of information did you receive on your end of the software? *[Check for time cues, etc.]*
- e. What are some of the functions that you use the most frequently? How does it work and what do you think of that functionality?
- f. How long did it take to conduct this review? Why?
- g. Wow, you actually did X? Why/how do you do that?
- h. What, if anything, do you think should be done about the situation?

Commented [21]: Could this be worded differently? It creates some feelings of disbelief that could be taken negatively.

[Results]

- How do you think your company has benefitted from using TalentGuard?
 - a. Were there any particular problems that TalentGuard helped your company resolve?
- What features of the software do you like the most?
 - a. Which have been most beneficial to your employees?
 - b. Your job role? Your company?
- Will your company keep using TalentGuard’s service for the future?
 - a. *[If so,]* why did you decide to choose TalentGuard rather than other companies’ services?
 - b. *[If not,]* which product do you think you will probably switch to?

Commented [22]: If you are asking a benefit question, it may be useful to also ask a question about the negative impacts of TalentGuard. Let your interviewee know beforehand that you will be asking about the positives and negatives. Ex: “We would like to know about some of the benefits and drawbacks of using TalentGuard. First, the benefits. How do you think your company has benefited..” etc. etc.

Commented [23R22]: Okay, I see the improvement section below that focuses on the drawbacks of TalentGuard. You could leave all of this as-is and disregard my comment. Another option for structuring this would be to stagger the questions so that they are asked in this order: [benefits], [issue], [best features], [worst features], etc. Take it or leave it, just a thought!

[Improvement]

- Can you tell us about a time that you encountered an issue with the software?
 - *[Follow up, if they don’t include in their response]*
 - What was the problem?
 - How did you fix the problem?
- What is the most difficult or frustrating feature of the software?
 - *[Follow up, if they don’t include in their response]*
 - Are there any tasks related to it that you dread doing?
- Can you tell me about any complaints you received from employees about the software?
- Are there any features that you wish to change/add to the software? If you could talk to a developer for TalentGuard, what would you ask them to change/add?
- Is there anything else you would like us to know about the product or your experience with it?

Interview Questions: Client— Subordinate

[Overarching Question]

- How do you feel about your experience using the software; how can the software be improved from an employee's perspective?

[Warm-Up]

- How long have you been using the TalentGuard product?
- When and how often do you use the software? Weekly? Monthly?
- How do you feel about the product so far?
- In your view, what is the main purpose/goal of TalentGuard software?

[Workflow]

- A. How did you first learn how to use TalentGuard software?
 - a. *[Follow up, if they don't include it in their response]*
 - b. You've been using it for [XYZ] *[weeks/months/years]*, right? How long did it take you to learn it?
 - c. Do you find the software difficult to use? If so, how would you rate the difficulty on a scale of 1-10 *[with 10 being the highest]*? Why?
- B. Could you please walk me through the last time when your skills and/or competencies were evaluated?
 - a. *[Follow up, if they don't include it in their response]*
 - b. What was the assessment initiation process like? How was it begun? By whom?
 - c. How did you feel when notified that you were being assessed? *[Excited?— learning opportunity? Anxious?— confusing interface? Note any emotions and any cues]*
 - d. What do you remember the most clearly from the assessment process? *[What stands out? Good or bad?]*
 - e. Can you give me a play-by-play of how you input information into the software and what it was like to do so? *[Check for understanding of emotions]*
 - f. Can you explain to me what your understanding of a “skill” is? Can you provide an example or two?
 - g. What kind of information did you receive on your end of the software? *[Check for time cues, etc.]*
 - h. How long did it take to review your own performances?
 - i. How did you feel about your review? Do you think it is accurate?
- C. Could you please share with us your experience of learning or improving your skills using TalentGuard?
 - a. What types of resources were provided to you? Are they easy to use?
 - b. How often do you study the material that was given to you?

- c. What do you think about these materials?
 - i. *[If positive,]* how did they help you learn/improve?
 - ii. *[If negative,]* why do you think they are not helpful?

[Results]

- How does TalentGuard aid/improve your ability to act as an employee?
- To what degree do you feel TalentGuard is achieving the goals that it advertised to clients?
- Do you think TalentGuard's evaluation of your skills is fair?
 - a. *[If not,]* in what respect do you think the evaluation is unfair?
 - b. *[If so,]* in what respect do you think the software lacks?
- Do you follow the recommendations that TalentGuard gives?
 - a. *[If so,]* do you think they have assisted you in achieving your career goals?
 - b. *[If not,]* why have you chosen not to follow these recommendations?

[Improvement]

- Can you tell me about the last time you felt frustrated with the software?
- Have you ever been stuck on one or more of the steps of the software?
 - a. Can you tell me your experience step-by-step?
 - b. How do you think this can be improved?
 - c. What are some solutions that you think can solve this problem? How have you solved these problems in the past?
- Is there anything else you would like me to know about the product or your experience with it?

[Conclusion]

Those are all the questions we have for you. If anything else occurs to you after we leave, please don't hesitate to let me know by email at quartetconsulting@umich.edu. We may be in touch with you again to ask a few follow-up questions. And, in about 6-8 weeks, after we've concluded all the interviews and our analysis, we will send you our final report, which will also be provided to your organization. We're also scheduled to do a presentation, and I believe you will be invited to that. Thanks again!