



The Hiring Manager's "Human Skills" Evaluation Matrix

A Practical Scorecard for Assessing Strategic Judgment, Adaptability, and Problem-Solving in Modern Supply Chain Talent

HOW TO USE THIS SCORECARD

Use this five-part matrix during structured interviews to evaluate capabilities that technology and automation can't easily replicate. For each competency, use the targeted question to explore **how the candidate thinks, responds, and makes decisions**, then assign a score from **1 (Operational Maintainer)** to **5 (Strategic Builder)**.

1. STRATEGIC JUDGMENT & PROBLEM-SOLVING

What Good Looks Like Ability to beyond static task execution. Identifies operational bottlenecks, diagnoses root causes, and recommends improvements without waiting for explicit direction.

Ask "Tell me about a time you inherited an inefficient operational process. How did you identify the root cause, and what did you do to improve it?"

Listen For

- Identifies the underlying problem rather than treating the symptom
- Explains the reasoning behind the solution
- Takes ownership without waiting for step-by-step direction
- Measures or recognizes the impact of the change

Score

1 – Maintainer: Executes the existing process

3 – Adaptable: Identifies problems and adjusts when needed

5 – Strategic Builder: Proactively identifies root causes and creates better solutions

Score: ____ / 5

Notes:

2. CRITICAL OUTPUT AUDITING

What Good Looks Like Doesn't automatically trust reports, software, automated outputs, or data models. Applies real-world logistics context before acting.

Ask "Describe a situation where data or automated reporting gave you an answer that didn't feel right. How did you verify the information before making a decision?"

Listen For

- Questions information rather than accepting it at face value
- Cross-checks against additional sources or operational context
- Understands the potential consequences of incorrect information
- Can explain why human judgment was necessary

Score

1 – Accepts Data: Relies primarily on the information provided

3 – Verifies: Checks questionable information before acting

5 – Audits Context: Investigates inconsistencies and applies operational context before

Score: ____ / 5

Notes:

3. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE & RELATIONSHIP TRUST

What Good Looks Like Navigates difficult carrier, customer, and team interactions effectively while building relationships that extend beyond individual transactions.

Ask *“Walk me through how you maintained or strengthened an important customer or carrier relationship during a major service disruption or rate dispute.”*

Listen For

- Understands the other party's priorities
- Communicates clearly during difficult situations
- Balances the relationship with business requirements
- Thinks beyond resolving the immediate problem

Score

1 – Transactional: Focuses primarily on resolving the immediate issue

3 – Empathetic: Understands the other perspective and communicates effectively

5 – Trusted Partner: Protects the relationship while navigating difficult business decisions

Score: ____ / 5

Notes:

4. ADAPTIVE RESILIENCE & AMBIGUITY

What Good Looks Like Operates effectively through market changes, technology rollouts, disruptions, and unexpected challenges without requiring a step-by-step playbook.

Ask *“Give me an example of how you managed a major supply chain disruption when there wasn't an existing playbook or complete information available.”*

Listen For

- Remains effective without having every answer
- Prioritizes what matters most
- Evaluates risk before acting
- Adjusts the plan as new information becomes available

Score

1 – Needs a Playbook: Relies heavily on established processes and direction

3 – Flexible: Adjusts effectively as circumstances change

5 – Navigates Ambiguity: Creates structure and moves forward despite incomplete information

Score: ____ / 5

Notes:



5. VALUE FRAMING & BUSINESS IMPACT

What Good Looks Like Understands how individual decisions affect company P&L, customer retention, service, risk, and long-term performance.

Ask “How do you evaluate the trade-off between short-term margin pressure and long-term customer value when making an operational decision?”

Listen For

- Considers more than the immediate metric
- Connects decisions to financial or customer impact
- Recognizes competing priorities and trade-offs
- Can explain why a decision creates long-term value

Score

1 – Siloed View: Focuses primarily on immediate responsibilities or metrics

3 – Business Aware: Considers cost and broader business implications

5 – P&L Minded: Connects decisions to financial performance, customer value, and long-term outcomes

Score: ____ / 5

Notes:

TOTAL SCORE: ____ / 25

21-25 | The Strategic Builder: Demonstrates strong judgment, proactive problem-solving, adaptability, and the ability to operate beyond a static task list. Well suited for roles requiring independent thinking and strategic impact.

15-20 | The Adaptable Professional: Demonstrates strong core capabilities with potential to take on greater strategic responsibility. Consider where coaching, experience, or additional exposure could accelerate development.

Under 15 | The Operational Maintainer: May be more comfortable operating within established processes, clearly defined responsibilities, and existing playbooks. Consider whether the position requires greater independence, ambiguity tolerance, or strategic problem-solving.

Look Beyond the Job Description

Technical experience tells you whether someone understands the work.

Human skills help you understand **what they'll do when the work changes**.

Use this scorecard alongside your existing interview criteria to identify candidates who can not only execute today's responsibilities, but adapt, solve problems, and create value as your organization evolves.

Need Help Finding Strategic Talent?

CS Recruiting specializes in Supply Chain, Logistics, and Transportation talent across professional, leadership, and specialized roles.