How do you assess candidates?

- **Communication:** Ability to form concise, jargon-free, well-structured answers that address the point of discussion and structure a narrative, e.g., using the STAR method: situation, task, action and result. Ability to speak from experience, not theory. Ability to engage with the interviewer actively through back-and-forth discussions. People that come across as genuine.

- **Curiosity:** The quality of questions they ask, which demonstrates their inquisitiveness, level of preparation and interest in the position, and depth of thought (e.g., talks about more than just finance).

- **Complex/critical thinking:** Scenario-related questions or abstract consulting-interview questions to see how they structure their approach.

- **Personal attributes:** A deep dive into a specific project/event to seek clarity on leadership, collaboration, influencing skills, etc. Does the candidate show vulnerability, self-awareness and the capacity to improve? Does the candidate show stability, personal efficiency, and an ability to engage and think on their feet?

- **Fit and aspiration:** Careful to consider how a candidate can help move the team forward, not simply fill the box. Match of job fit vs career goals. Cultural fit as a teammate.

- **Evidence of skills:** Give them an Excel challenge and see how they solve it. Try to find out if there are inconsistencies in their listed resume skills. Do they understand business in general and how data flows through systems?

- **Self-awareness:** Strength of conviction, ability to self-assess strengths and weaknesses, and ability to corroborate with many examples. “I prefer answers that are balanced in terms of providing individuals accountability but more importantly if there are some challenges/struggles/dilemmas from the individuals, it reflects a more honest and balanced view and also confirms a bit of learner’s mindset.”

- **Getting to know you:** It is important to show that care about the “whole person” sitting in front of you.

- **Motivation:** Look for someone who wants to grow and be good.

What are some of your favorite interview questions?

- Tell us about a new skill/procedure/complex problem you have had to resolve. What were the steps you took, and were you successful?

- Tell us about a time you had to make an important decision but did not have all the information.

- What is a project/event that you are proud of from the last two-year period? Elaborate what your role was in getting to the outcomes of this project/event. What could have been done better?

- Please describe a time you had to bring a group of senior stakeholders around to your way of thinking. Describe the situation, your actions and the outcome.

- Tell us about a time you joined a team and had to accomplish a common goal.

- What is the most successful yet challenging activity/project you have led?

- Tell me about a time you had to manage a difficult situation with customers or senior management.

- What is your approach to managing poor performance in your team?

- What do you consider to be effective staff development opportunities that can be offered to the team?

- Tell me about that team and your experience. What role or position do you take when on a team?

- Tell me about yourself and why you are well suited for this role.

- What are your interests outside of work?

- What questions do you have for me?
If you were to give yourself a second skill beyond finance, like a double major or a minor in university, what would it be?

- **Communication**: Any kind of language degree to help convey messages better; a communication degree from the College of Letters and Science, because the business communication class at the business school is not enough.
- **Data/IT**: Business intelligence or information technology-related, data science, data management, Python.
- **Complementary disciplines**: Marketing, International Business Management, Economics.
- **Excel!**: In 2000, all business undergraduates in my school were required to pass an Excel test. The diploma would be held before you passed that test. Now I really appreciate my school’s forward-thinking mindset.
- **Skills**: Business process architecture, problem solving.

How do you make yourself an attractive employer?

- **Compensation**: Competitive compensation and benefits/perks. Benchmark your salary and benefits.
- **Quality of life**: Articulate and promote flexible work options. Respect employees’ private hours and family commitments.
- **Culture**: Try to provide an energizing environment via healthy company culture: open-minded, learning, authentic, people-oriented, teaming-based, collaborative work and meritocracy, managing without micromanaging.
- **Growth opportunities**: Offer horizontal development in addition to vertical advancement opportunities for learning, responsibility and mentoring. Create a growth plan and move people to different parts of the company and the world.
- **Quality of management**: Show the ability to make quick decisions — including an efficient hiring process; prize innovation and planning for long-term results.
- **Relevance**: Show how finance adds value to the business, focus on business performance drivers and ensure interesting work!
- **Brand**: Be a recognized brand name in the marketplace; monitor chatter about your company, e.g., ratings on websites like Glassdoor.

How do you make yourself an attractive candidate?

- **Finance and business thinking**: Understand financial position, operating model and key drivers; ask non-finance-related questions about the company to demonstrate you are a well-rounded candidate. Research and understand the industry and the organization.
- **Agility**: Be flexible and willing to accept and learn the new working culture and systems. Demonstrate the ability to lead through change and difficult times. Show that you are able to contribute in a variety of different situations and manage competing priorities.
- **Interpersonal skills**: Be a strong business partner. To succeed in any role, “soft skills” are required, including collaboration, conflict resolution, networking, authenticity, ability to be a team player, ability to work under pressure, ability to communicate thoughts clearly, and ability to influence.
- **Display growth mindset**: Demonstrate a learning attitude regardless of experience level through things such as progressive experiences, continuing professional education (degrees and certifications) and extra development projects. Ask good questions and engage with the interviewer’s responses. Show drive to succeed.
- **Leadership**: Demonstrate ability to motivate and engage a diverse workforce.
- **Show experience**: Highlight results and prior achievements and be prepared to discuss the keys to success.
- **Demonstrate interest**: Research and show you understand the role, company and industry.
How are you upskilling yourself, and your team?

- **70/20/10 model**: 70% of their knowledge from challenging experiences and assignments, 20% from developmental relationships, and 10% from coursework and training.
- **On-the-job opportunities**: To gain exposure to different areas - for example through projects, job rotations, shadowing.
- **Development plans**: Setting meaningful development goals, in context of the annual performance cycle. Setting aside intentional L&D time on calendars.
- **Internal knowledge share**: 1-on-1 coaching or direct mentoring. Facilitated cross training and internal workshops, including having more experienced analysts share specific knowledge (e.g., SQL and data visualization); bringing other company experts (e.g., IT and accounting); creating networks within the organization to connect people throughout the organization.
- **External networking**: Get involved with professional societies, advisory panels and volunteering. Understanding the changes to their profession and how it impacts them.
- **Education**: Software vendor learning systems, company training resources, LinkedIn learning, formal qualification like CPA, FPAC, CTP, online courses.
- **Reading and research**: Staying current on best and emerging practices via LinkedIn articles and influencers, earnings call transcript to understand how CEOs/CFOs are viewing their companies within the respective industries, and reading more industry related information instead of functional information.
- **Hiring**: Hiring top talent proactively and bring those skills inside the company to educate others.
- **Tools**: Becoming expert on software in use, such as data management, visualisation, Information systems and data analytics.
- **Personal and team effectiveness**: Specific focus on the following areas using much of the above methods: partnering, presentation and speaking, team-work, leadership, emotional intelligence, listening, being a good manager.

How do you plan career development moves?

- **Move outside of finance**: Encourage team members to look for roles outside of finance to gain perspective from other functions, including P&L responsibility.
- **Challenge yourself**: Taking new jobs challenges you and helps you bring existing ideas to a new team.
- **Have a development plan**: Keep plans and goals current through periodic discussions and actions in the short and medium terms. Managers help individuals to expand their thinking of what is possible, and individuals need to make choices that fit with their development journeys.
- **Start with “why”**: Encourage the team to understand their motivation and “why” (e.g., through a goal-setting workshop).
- **Enlist support**: Share your goal with people who support your development. Encourage open and non-judgmental conversations about roles and opportunities so that the group can work on it and plan together. For example, practice mock interviews and get suggestions from others you trust on how to work on any technical or experience gaps.
- **Share a developmental framework**: Each person in a role moves through three phases. Phase 1: Understand your role and learn the basics of the job. Phase 2: Move through the learning curve and become effective at doing the job. Phase 3: Leave your mark on the role by re-engineering it and improving it for the next person. This is where true expertise is gained and where people achieve tremendous job satisfaction. Keep your team focused on getting to phase 3 before they start thinking about their next role. Moving people too fast doesn’t help them or the organization!